LEGACY OF BLOOD

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Jews, Pogroms, and Ritual Murder in the Lands of the Soviets

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Ai miei genitori, Nino e Donna, per aver sempre riso e sorriso

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In transliterating Russian, Ukrainian, and Hebrew I have followed the Library of Congress guidelines, but I have chosen to eliminate most diacritical marks and to present the names of famous personalities as they are commonly used in English (e.g., Leon Trotsky, not Trotskii; Dubnow rather than Dubnov). Yiddish words are transliterated according to the system established by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. I spell out the names of well-known personalities, such as Mendele Mocher Seforim, as they are usually spelled in English, without reference to the YIVO rules of transliteration. I identify place names with the spelling used at the time by the Soviets, but I always include the current spelling or changed name of the location as well (e.g., Proskurov, Proskuriv, Khmielnytskyi). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION

FROM BLOOD LEGACIES TO BLOODLANDS

Pogroms and blood libels constitute the two classic and most extreme manifestations of tsarist antisemitism. They were often closely intertwined in history and memory, not least because the accusation of blood libel, the allegation that Jews murder Christian children to use their blood for ritual purposes, frequently triggered anti-Jewish violence. Such events were and are considered central to the Jewish experience in late tsarist Russia, the only country on earth with large-scale anti-Jewish violence in the early twentieth century. Boasting its break from the tsarist period, the Soviet regime proudly claimed to have eradicated these forms of antisemitism. But, alas, life was much more complicated.

The phenomenon and the memory of pogroms and blood libels in different areas of interwar Soviet Union—including Ukraine, Belorussia, Russia, and Central Asia—as well as, after World War II, in the newly annexed territories of Lithuania, western Ukraine, and western Belorussia are a reminder of continuities in the midst of revolutionary ruptures. The persistence, the permutation, and the responses to anti-Jewish violence and memories of violence suggest that Soviet Jews (and non-Jews alike) cohabited with a legacy of blood that did not vanish. This book traces the "afterlife" of these extreme manifestations of antisemitism in the USSR, and in doing so sheds light on the broader question of the changing position of Jews in Soviet society.

One notable rupture in manifestations of antisemitism from tsarist to Soviet times included the virtual disappearance—at least during the interwar period—of the tight link between pogroms and blood allegations, indeed a common feature in the waves of anti-Jewish violence that erupted during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The synergy between the blood libel and

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the pogrom had become standard under Alexander III and Nicholas II, as anti-Jewish violence was usually sparked (or justified) by a missing Christian child allegedly taken by the Jews for ritual needs.[1] With few exceptions, under the Soviets the blood libel did not dovetail with the pogrom, and, at least during the 1920s and 1930s, public attacks and displays of violence against Jews receded. Some claims of Jewish ritual murder in the Soviet Union never went beyond rumor mongering, and many were followed by criminal investigations of varying intensity and duration.

The bulk of scholarship on antisemitism in the Soviet context has focused on top-down government policies. Although the state is an important player—and the stronger and more centralized the state and its infrastructure, the more unlikely was the eruption of spontaneous anti-Jewish violence—a bottom-up focus shatters the myth of a monolithic Soviet government and reveals the extreme diversity of the actors involved. These included central, regional, and local authorities. For Jews, full-fledged equality in the Soviet Union hinged more on central authorities than on local authorities. In confronting cases of blood libel accusations in a Soviet city, or cases about restitution of property that had been looted in the wake of the pogroms of the Russian Civil War (1917–21), Jews had a better chance of seeing their grievances met by turning to central authorities, who would curb the antisemitism of local authorities. Conversely, since the main actors voicing antisemitism were usually connected to local and regional authorities, Jews tended to ally themselves with central authorities for protection.

The choice of an alliance with the state, often made under extreme conditions and threats of violence, would bear profound consequences.[2] For one, it bolstered the idea of a Jewish propensity for communism. The Bolsheviks' validation of the legal emancipation of Jews, which allowed them to join the political system, and participate in the newly established socialist society without quotas or discrimination, further encouraged this notion. In the eyes of many Soviet citizens, the state was complicit in consenting to the unnatural and incomprehensible rise of Jews to new socioeconomic positions of power, of visibility, of responsibility.

The Jewish presence in the secret police, for example, was in many ways an offensive revolution in the accepted social order. To be sure, Jews were encouraged to enlist in the Soviet secret police (Cheka), or joined of their own will, in substantial numbers, for different reasons. These included their higher levels of literacy (a precious commodity in order to conduct an investigation), their loyalty (Jews could not be suspected of allegiance to tsarist Russia), the allure of opportunity (being a member of the secret police came

with privileges), and belief (not unlike many other Russians, Ukrainians, and Poles, many Jews were true believers in the Communist project).

But there was an additional key motivation that explains, at least in part, the high proportion of Jews serving in this institution, namely, the unprecedented anti-Jewish violence unleashed during the civil war. The violence that struck family members and friends encouraged many young Jews to join the Cheka.[3] The prospect of taking revenge against the murderers in the pogroms drove many Jews to join the Soviet secret police during the Red Terror.[4] In the words of a former Bundist, "It is no secret that we have members who were won over to the Party solely because the Soviet government does not carry out pogroms against the Jews."[5] Writing a few years after the civil war, Soviet Yiddish writer Itsik Kipnis captured the trauma and the choice driven by a desperate yearning for revenge: "[T]he older son enlisted as a volunteer in the Red Army. He could find no rest, and he could not understand why his father had been killed. He enlisted in the army promising that he would 'do something.' "[6]

The assumption of a deep-seated Jewish propensity for communism was (and is) a prejudiced assertion.[7] This book captures the burgeoning of the Judeo-Bolshevism narrative, which blossomed in the midst of the pogroms and at times came to merge with the blood libel trope.[8] In the interwar period this narrative depended, at least in part, on the Bolshevik ban on antisemitism and anti-Jewish violence in those territories that since the late nineteenth century had become the lands of pogroms and blood libels. It was then reinforced by the extraordinary success story of Jewish upward mobility in Soviet society. In the midst of World War II, when faced with the choice between fascism and communism, Jews were left with very little wiggle room to be picky, and chose communism (the political entity representing it rather than the ideology) in the hope of survival. This assumption of a Jewish proclivity for communism survived even when in the postwar period the regime fundamentally revised its avowed intolerance of antisemitism and revisited its view on the place that Jews could occupy in Soviet society. In a large multiethnic geopolitical entity like the USSR, which came to be dominated by the Russian ethnic group, the Jewish minority tended to assimilate with the dominant language and culture of the empire, namely, Russian. In post-1945 Soviet-controlled Ukraine, Lithuania, as well as Communist Poland, for example, Jews came to be seen as agents of the colonial power, as proxies of the rule from Moscow. This view played into the widespread claim of Judeo-Bolshevism.

The "blood legacies" were made of genocidal impulses that erupted during the pogroms, of memories of anti-Jewish violence, and of the

recurring claim of Jewish ritual murder and its multiple permutations. They became a necessary component for the events that unraveled in the "Bloodlands." It is difficult to fully grasp the dynamics of violence unleashed during World War II in the region of Eastern Europe, which comprised present-day Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, without integrating the historical violence and memories of violence that earmarked Jews. The blood legacies played a central role in the carnage of European Jewry and made the Bloodlands likely.[9]

The Legacy of the Pogroms

"It is impossible to imagine what happened here on Saturday, February 15, [1919]. This was not a pogrom. It was like the Armenian slaughter,"[10] wrote a witness to the violence unleashed at the height of the Russian Civil War, in the city of Proskurov (Proskuriv, now Khmielnytskyi), located in the historic region of Podolia, on the banks of the Bug River. In just a few hours the members of the Ukrainian nationalist forces murdered more than 1,600 Jews. Deeming the violence unlike all previous waves of anti-Jewish pogroms, the witness could only compare it to the Armenian genocide, the systematic extermination of 1.5 million Armenians, at the hands of the Young Turks, which took place from 1915 to 1917 in the context of the collapsing Ottoman Empire. "I do not have the strength to describe the details of the slaughter," he wrote; "Simply remembering it makes me lose my mind. This slaughter surpassed the violence of all the pogroms ever experienced by Jews."[11]

The events in Proskurov were part of an intense wave of anti-Jewish violence that erupted in more than nine hundred cities, towns, and villages throughout Ukraine, Belorussia, and southern Russia, as the main adversaries in the civil war faced each other from 1917, following the Revolution, to 1921, when the Bolsheviks defeated their enemies and gained a complete victory. The forces involved in this fierce conflict included the Red Army, which was led by the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, Leon Trotsky, and which engaged in a sacred war against all the enemies of Bolshevik power[12]; the White Volunteer Army, which fought for the reinstatement of the tsar and the return to monarchism, and which came to pose a mortal danger to the nascent Soviet regime in August 1918, with the advancement of Admiral Alexander Kolchak toward Moscow, and in the fall of 1919 when General Anton Denikin conquered most of Ukraine[13] Symon Petliura's Directory, the Ukrainian nationalist government, which strove to

gain control over the southwest region of the former Russian empire; the Polish Army, which in the context of the bloody Polish-Soviet war between the newly independent Poland and the Bolshevik regime took over most of the northwestern regions of the former empire; and, finally, a diverse group of anarchist peasant bands; these included the so-called Green Army, which disassociated itself from the ideology of the other combatants, but consistently resisted the Soviet grain requisition policies, and the anarchist bands lead by Nestor Makhno, which initially cooperated with local communist forces but eventually refused Soviet authority.[14]

Often carried out in military fashion, the pogroms of the civil war differed from the pre-revolutionary pogroms of 1881–82 and those of 1903–6 also because they took place in the aftermath of "The war to end all wars," in the midst of new forms of extreme violence that tapered the inhibition to kill and witness murder. The violence was perpetrated by organized military forces, and not only by chaotic "bands of hooligans"; the scale of murder was unprecedented; it often involved the participation of previously peaceful and even friendly neighbors; and because of the conditions of civil war, extreme violence and murder became socially acceptable.[15]

The loyalties of thousands of Jewish communities on the Eastern Front were tested by the different armies fighting in World War I. Identified as potentially dangerous "enemy aliens" by the Russian Imperial army, Jews faced expulsions and deportations, and often looting and rape.[16] In the wake of the unprecedented carnage and chaos that erased all vestiges of civil society, the Jews were caught up in the crossfire of the new allegiances at stake during the civil war. More than other minority populations, including the Mennonnites, Jews became once again an easy target for violence. Caught at the juncture of a forceful exclusivist nationalism, on the rise since the late nineteenth century and at its peak during World War I, Jews were seen as interlopers in the different national bodies at danger during the war. They could be easily identified with those forces tearing at the heart of the nation's fabric, of Russia, of newly independent Poland, and of a Ukraine striving for independence. The greatest hazard of course was Bolshevism. And regardless of their actual choice, in the imagination of many Russians, Poles, and Ukrainians, Jews morphed into vectors for spreading communism. The growing perception of Jews as compromised political actors in the context of the civil war encouraged the rumors about the Bolsheviks' intention to launch an uprising lead by Jewish socialists.

In most Jewish settlements the pogroms typically coincided with the power vacuum left by the departure of one army and the onset of the next

occupation, as the crumbling of state power aggravated Jews' vulnerability.[17] Recurrent reports and rumors of alleged Jewish disloyalty toward Ukraine or Poland and allegiance to the Soviets often triggered war pogroms in the former Pale of Settlement. In many ways this was also a continuation of the pre-1917 tsarist rhetoric of identifying the revolutionary movement with the Jews.[18] Indeed thousands of young Jews, ostracized under the realm of Nicholas II, had opted to engage in anti-state activity as Jewish radicalism quickly crystallized by the early twentieth century. But while almost all Jews opposed tsarism, only a minority favored socialism. And those who came to favor socialism did so also as a result of the lack of alternatives in the politicization process of this exceedingly urban and literate minority: embracing Polish, Russian, or Ukrainian nationalism was hardly an option for Jews. In late Imperial Russia, for example, the term "patriot" had become synonymous with "rabid antisemite."

The fact that in 1918 Jews quickly established self-defense units to protect the communities under attack further intensified this no-win situation. Their assertiveness was perceived as a provocation, as a sign of potential disloyalty of a minority group that refused to behave obediently and submissively and which could therefore expect revenge in the form of pogroms. In different areas of the former empire, thus, Ukrainian, White, and Polish forces attempted to restore their moral order by punishing Jews for allegedly breaking out of social norms they considered standard for a minority.[19] Petliura and Denikin haphazardly condemned anti-Jewish violence. But they were slow, at times deliberately so, in rebuking their troops. They saw the violence as a successful tactic to bond their all too divided troops against a common enemy. In other words, they resorted to "pogrom politics" to struggle against Bolshevik forces. If initially most Jewish parties supported the Central Rada of Ukraine, the political body of the Ukrainian People's Republic that existed from 1917 to 1918, the accelerated intensity of the violence against them eventually swayed them into seeking protection from the Red Army.

Red Army soldiers were not immune to perpetrating atrocities against Jews: many of them were moved by stereotypes of Jews as capitalist exploiters of the downtrodden proletariat. In the absence of a firm ideological conviction, some Red Army soldiers operated on the basis of the allure of looting, indeed an appealing temptation given the desperate conditions of war. If the Red Army shared responsibility in the anti-Jewish violence unleashed during the civil war, Soviet power was alone in condemning pogroms by their own forces and resisting targeting Jews for violence.[20] While Jews suffered economically and otherwise under communism, they came to support the Red

Army in action, and reluctantly chose the Bolsheviks because they killed relatively few Jews or stopped killing them altogether.

During the approximately 1,500 pogroms, which took place primarily in Ukraine, perhaps as many as 150,000 Jews were murdered,[21] 300,000 Jewish children were orphaned, thousands were wounded and permanently disfigured, thousands of women were raped, and Jewish property was looted or destroyed in its entirety.[22] Jewish historian Elias Tcherikower, who meticulously collected and recorded materials about these pogroms, defined the anti-Jewish violence of the civil war "one of the worse catastrophes that has ever shaken the fate of the greatest Jewish center in the world, . . . which was devastated, shattered into pieces, and broken in its economic foundation."[23] And yet, despite the wealth of material available, the personal accounts, official reports, and statistics assembled by an array of different organizations and relief agencies active in situ at the time, the pogroms that took place in the territories ravished by the civil war are largely understudied.

Overshadowed by the Holocaust, and yet such a fundamental chapter to understand its wider implications, this history is not only largely absent from the narrative of modern Jewish history.[24] It is also not fully integrated into the study of the Soviet Jewish experience, into the study of the process of acculturation, assimilation, and Sovietization undergone by the second largest Jewish community in pre-Holocaust Europe. How did the pogroms of the Russian Civil War affect the choices made by those Jews who could not—or did not want to—flee the new regime in formation? How did the memory of the violence affect their identity and interact with the memory of pre-revolutionary anti-Jewish violence? What happened to the thousands of raped women who preserved in their memory the terror of their violation; how did they integrate this experience into their lives under Soviet power?[25] And how was this violence commemorated by the Soviet state and its citizens? How did this experience of trauma mark the choices made, for example, by Naum Gaiviker, a six-year-old boy at the time of the Proskurov pogrom, who remembered the soldier who threatened to cut off his head, and who saw "that over there were heads, over there were hands, over there were feet. And all of his friends were killed off. And he, just a boy, stayed alive. It tormented him his entire life."[26]

In answering these questions, this book captures the long-term impact of the trauma of the violence of the civil war on Soviet Jewry. On the one hand, the events of 1918–21 revived the memory of the pogroms of 1881–82 and 1903–6. On the other hand, this trauma left an indelible imprint on Soviet Jews' relationship with the Bolshevik state, with their neighbors, and shaped

new communities of violence and communities of memory.[27] This experience remained a founding one for Soviet Jewry especially against the backdrop of a new society that saw the virtual disappearance of pogroms.

The Legacy of the Blood Libel

When the lifeless body of a three-year-old child was discovered in a provincial city in Soviet Russia, a Communist Party member turned with wrath to his Jewish neighbor and asked, "Why did you drink the little boy's blood?" It was 1926, nine years after the Bolsheviks had launched their ostensible pledge to establish a modern, atheistic, and rational society without antisemitism. And yet the plausibility of a Jewish propensity to carry out ritual murder, the centuries-old false allegation that Jews murder Christian children to use their blood for ritual purposes, was voiced by one of the members of the vanguard of Soviet society. How was this possible?

As historian Jonathan Frankel has reminded us, this is not the right question to ask. Historians have erroneously focused on the gradual marginalization of the ritual murder charge over the span of the last 350 years, while overlooking the extraordinary vitality of this false myth in modern—as well as contemporary—history. Ritual murder should also be investigated in the context of the modern Jewish experience, as a by-product of modernization, as the outgrowth of the "dark side of modern times."[28] And if the irrational is an essential ingredient of modernization, then the blood libel could surely become a factor in the hyper-rational, modern, atheistic society that the Bolsheviks strove to create.

While the blood allegation never became the archetypal expression of antisemitism in Soviet society, it still deserves close attention. First, its persistence under the Bolsheviks reveals that this accusation did not dissipate after the 1911–13 Beilis Affair, the most spectacular blood libel in modern Europe. The arrest and trial of Menachem Mendl Beilis, who was accused of killing a Ukrainian boy for ritual needs, and eventually acquitted on the dubious verdict that left room for much disbelief, was not the last blood allegation of the first half of the twentieth century in the territories of the former Russian Empire.[29] In fact, the claim of Jewish ritual murder remained an issue in Soviet society that both authorities and Jews had to deal with throughout the interwar period and into the early 1960s. Second, ritual murder accusations in Soviet society (which involved the intervention of local and central authorities, police investigations and trials) can be used as a canvas to explore neighborhood sociology, memory and habits

of violence, and reasons for the endurance and permutation of the accusation.[30] Third, overlapping with other religiously based traditional anti-Jewish accusations—such as the "Christ-killers" charge of deicide, or that of an existing anti-Christian conspiracy such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—ritual murder also came to intersect with the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism; namely, with the idea that Soviet communism was really part of a wider Jewish scheme to seize power.[31]

The accusations that Jews were at the head of atheistic communism and that they performed murderous religious rituals could easily interconnect at the juncture of political and socioeconomic upheavals. To be sure, ritual murder accusations mushroomed in combination with the realization that the Sovietization of society entailed the frightening end of established, familiar, cherished patterns of life, and included the rise of Jews to new places and forms of power.[32] As in other contexts and time periods, even in the Soviet Union the blood libel echoed society's collective insecurities, and was retained as a cultural code to articulate social crisis.[33] In other words, Jews provoked unease because they blurred borderlines and upset familiar pre-revolutionary categories.[34]

The accusation of ritual murder lies at the core of the Western tradition of anti-Judaism, and the belief in this legend requires no evidence at all.[35] The alleged crime had never occurred. It was nevertheless deeply embedded in the popular consciousness of Christian Europe, and particularly rooted in the religious and literary output during medieval and early-modern times. The blood legend traveled efficiently through word of mouth, preserving its well-known tropes through folklore and anti-Jewish religious and (later) racial mythologies; and, from time to time, it was reinvigorated (or exploited) by modern media and mass politics.[36]

The public accusation against Jews for the crime of ritual murder proliferated in Central and Eastern Europe during the early decades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While the majority of these claims of Jewish ritual murder never went beyond rumor mongering, many were followed by criminal investigations. And in some instances Jewish defendants were publicly prosecuted for the crime. But not under the Soviets. Unlike tsarist Russia, here the blood libel ceased to be politically and culturally acceptable.[37] Though the blood libel cropped up socially, the Soviets never held any trials against Jews accused of committing ritual murder.

Prosecuting a Jew for ritual murder would have neutralized the official struggle against antisemitism, which was launched in the midst of the civil war when Lenin avowed "to tear the antisemitic movement out

by the roots."[38] Signed by Lenin on July 27, 1918, the decree on antisemitism was recorded on phonograph records and disseminated through the gramophones of the propaganda trains, played in workers' clubs and at Party meetings.[39] In other words, the Bolshevik condemnation of antisemitism was clear-cut, categorical, and one of the most visible features of the new regime, maintained on the official level for all of Soviet history. And while Jews endured economic hardship (as a largely petit bourgeois element), persecution of their religion (alongside other religions), and the dissolution of their national movement (Zionism), they never forgot the debt of gratitude that they owed to Soviet power.

The Bolsheviks exhibited an impressive resolve in discrediting and stomping out the blood libel and prosecuted those who resorted to the accusation. From the start the regime dramatically and publicly repudiated the Beilis case. In an event of great symbolic significance, the Soviet authorities tried and executed the major figures involved in the Beilis trial (including the prosecutor, and chief "eyewitness"). Yet, ritual murder did not disappear in the Soviet context. The belief in Jewish ritual murder proved to be resilient, and it withstood the state's attempts to uproot it. In many instances Jews were forced to actually face the claim of having killed ritually, like in 1926 when the Communist Party member assumed that his Jewish neighbor had consumed the little boy's blood. More than other antisemitic myths, ritual murder aroused a deeply emotional reaction among Jews: it touched upon the question of belonging, addressed an allegedly inherent criminality, barbarism, and monstrosity, which in turn elicited a sense of danger and diffidence. The blood libel remained a source of fear and tension for Jews. In Jewish memory, any interaction with non-Jews could, under certain circumstances, evolve into an accusation of killing children, which in turn could spiral into a pogrom.

Which social groups then claimed Jewish ritual murder in Soviet society? When and why? Which factors and conditions triggered the accusations? Who were the purported victims and perpetrators of the crime? And which strategies did Jews employ to combat accusations of ritual murder, and to convince the Soviet state to intervene on their behalf especially when local authorities seemed to adhere to the resilient belief that Jews did indeed carry out the crime? In addressing these questions, this book considers the vagaries of the blood libel and the official responses to the accusation as barometers to measure the extent to which Jews reaped the promises of citizenship in Soviet society. To be sure, the recrudescence of antisemitism in the 1940s and early 1950s would make it more difficult for Jews to counter ritual murder accusation and to rely upon authorities for protection.

Of Course It's Not All About Antisemitism . . . and Yet . . .

Some scholars have warned against the dangers of focusing too much on the study of manifestations of antisemitism, including blood libels and pogroms.[40] It has even been suggested that we do away altogether with the terms "antisemitism" and "pogrom," insofar as their unempirical nature impedes rather than facilitates a deeper understanding of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews and in general of Jewish history.[41] But while the overdose of these terms might apply to the study of certain geopolitical contexts, it certainly does not relate to the study of the Soviet Union. Our understanding of popular antisemitism in the Soviet context, and our knowledge of the ways in which Bolshevik society responded to it, are—at best—sketchy and incomplete. Overly concerned with moving away from a Cold War-infused narrative of Jewish victimhood and silence, scholars (including the author of this book) have largely overlooked social antisemitism, eluding a much-needed nuanced approach.[42] Earlier scholarship—even in its starkest anti-Communist expressions—conceded that there were no pogroms or blood libels in the Soviet territories, which in turn made the exploration of these themes redundant. This book shows otherwise.

There is an unexplored history of antisemitism in the Soviet lands that sheds light on the complicated experience of concurrent Jewish empowerment and vulnerability. As a belief that Jews have common repulsive and damaging qualities that set them apart from non-Jews, antisemitism was also a corollary of the Jewish proximity (real or imagined) to power. It also emerged from the crisis produced by compulsory industrialization and urbanization and the ensuing competition in the labor market. In this fertile ground for ethnic tensions, Jews were seen as stepping out of the clearly delineated boundaries within the social hierarchy. "Why are there so many Jews in Soviet institutions," asked a Soviet citizen in 1927, and another one added "why do Jews control the state and the Party?"[43] Of course, the Bolsheviks knew that too much of a full-blown public campaign against antisemitism eventually ran the risk of sabotaging their efforts. While condemning it, Soviet authorities had to delicately untangle the popular assumption of a connection existing between Jews and Bolshevism. As a result, the state's containment of and protection from antisemitism could never be impeccable, and persisted only as long as the shadow of Jewish power and secrecy did not upset the legitimacy and popularity of the new system. As we will see, following the directives from above, Jews and non-Jews alike were encouraged

to remember and commemorate certain aspects of the pogroms, while urged to forget other aspects of anti-Jewish violence deemed counterproductive and problematic in promoting the interests of the state. The state was ultimately not particularly interested in preserving the memory of interethnic conflict.

At the same time, Soviet Jews could take advantage of the official campaign against antisemitism: knowing that the state was on their side, they could claim antisemitism when in fact there was no evidence thereof. Jews could manipulate antisemitism in disguise in order to settle accounts with their neighbors, or simply attain social advancement. The study of antisemitism also touches upon emotions: the emotions that trigger the violence, or result from the violence, the emotions expressed through words, in crowds, in public spaces, when the talk of pogrom or the talk of ritual murder overcame the hearts of all, the emotions embedded in the memories of violence, which in turn elicited new layers of emotions.

Pursuing pogrom perpetrators or confronting the accusation of ritual murder in the interwar years, Jews experienced a boost of confidence and self-assurance. In a global context of antisemitism, they knew that they were safe from anti-Jewish violence, and that the Soviet Union was at the time the only country in Europe in which holding antisemitic views was a crime no less than acting upon them.[44] The tendency to blame the Jews for the socioeconomic changes in Soviet society was widespread. But while Jews were identified with the mixed economy of the NEP years and Trotsky was accused of using industrialization to promote Jewish domination, there were no official or high-placed calls to marginalize Jews from the national economy.[45] Such calls were indeed common in contemporary Poland, especially in the 1930s, whereas Nazi Germany actually enacted the marginalization of Jews after 1933. For Soviet citizens of Jewish and other nationalities, the troubles besetting the capitalist world in the 1930s (which included fascism, a major economic depression, and state antisemitism) provided a kind of cogency to Soviet claims of superiority even when things in the USSR were not exactly idyllic.

Soviet propaganda took great pride in eradicating pogroms and blood libels. But closer examination of archival sources and of the provincial press (especially in Yiddish) indicate that blood libels, and in some cases even pogroms, actually persisted under the Soviets. These were instances of grassroots violence, seemingly forgotten constellations of popular antisemitism. Their ebb and flow depended on the degree to which local and central authorities took the struggle against antisemitism seriously or not. Interestingly, both phenomena, blood libels and pogroms, spiked during World War II and in its aftermath. In the words of a Soviet citizen who perceived this new

development almost as inevitable, "The Germans killed them, and now even the Russians will kill them."[46]

Indeed, during the last years of Stalin's rule, the "Black years of Soviet Jewry," the regime sponsored an orderly massacre of the Soviet Yiddish intelligentsia. The most prominent Yiddish authors, educators, and performers were executed, and virtually all others were deported to the Gulag, in what can be called a state pogrom. In 1953, Stalin embraced a secularized version of the blood libel in the so-called Doctors' Plot. The Soviets accused Jewish doctors of assassinating high-ranking officials through medical means, upon order from Zionist groups and Jewish relief agencies on behalf of American espionage. The systematic purge of Yiddish cultural personalities and the campaign against the Jewish doctors might have accidentally served as a distraction from blood libels and pogroms, domesticating and deflating popular antisemitism. At the same time, however, the "pogrom" and the "blood libel" so meticulously planned by the Soviet state might have awakened from below memories and echoes of previous, more traditional pogroms and blood libels.

The blood spilled (or allegedly spilled) in the pogroms and in accusations of ritual murder became a powerful symbol and a metaphor to delineate boundaries of belonging. It nurtured a sense of solidarity and social cohesion among those who committed (or intended to commit) violence, and those who suffered from it. Rituals and performative acts involving blood, as well as memories of violence perpetrated or suffered, could create mechanisms of identification and establish a sense of order and identity, and perhaps even serve as a way to overcome and manage crisis.

1 THE POGROMS OF THE CIVIL WAR AND THE SOVIET-JEWISH ALLIANCE

Located thirteen miles southeast of the city of Uman, in the Cherkassy region of Central Ukraine, the shtetl of Dubovo was one of the hundreds of Jewish settlements west of the river Dnieper to be affected by the violence of the civil war. As the main combatant groups waged an exceptionally brutal war against each other, vying to control the territories of the former Russian Empire after the retreat of the German army in late 1918, the Jewish community of Dubovo was completely wiped out. Over the course of twelve months Dubovo came successively under all forces involved in the conflict, including the Red Army, the White Volunteer Army, the troops loyal to Symon Petliura's Directory, and diverse groups of armed peasant bands whose political allegiance vacillated inconsistently according to the needs of the day.

In this context of extreme violence and chaos anti-Jewish pogroms, which had a long history in the Russian empire, reappeared. They erupted in Ukraine, in particular, where the majority of Jews lived, and where the brutality of war reached its peak.[1] But these pogroms were different from previous ones. The intensity of violence shifted dramatically in 1919, exceeding the confines of urban riots. Influenced by the wider paramilitary confrontations, by extensive anti-Jewish (and anti-Bolshevik) propaganda, and by the mass population movements that began during World War I, the violence turned genocidal.[2]

With a Jewish community that dated back to the late eighteenth century, on the eve of the civil war Dubovo was not a renowned center of Jewish learning, nor one of noteworthy cultural or political Jewish enterprises.[3] As in most shtetls of Eastern Europe, the Jewish institutions and homes of the approximately 1,200 Jewish residents were located at its center.[4] The shtetl was surrounded by Ukrainian villages and lavish forests. Jewish cultural life was

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not overly sophisticated and developed but revolved around the traditional Jewish elementary school, the heder, two main synagogues, and a yeshiva for the most talented students. Traces of modern secular culture and politics had penetrated the life of the shtetl. Young Jewish girls from more affluent families studied in the local state school, together with the children of well-off Ukrainian peasants. During the summer, *gimnaziia* students from nearby Uman came to Dubovo and worked as private tutors in Jewish homes. Zionist activists increasingly gained support. A number of shtetl Jews, in particular from the local intelligentsia, espoused the Ukrainian cause, including the beautiful nieces of the mill owner Shkodik, who preferred to hang out with the Ukrainian youth, and were fond of Ukrainian folk songs.[5] Moshe Arn Berdyczewski, father of the Hebrew writer Micha Yosef Berdyczewski, served as the town rabbi for more than fifty years.[6] While he spent his days studying and recoiling from the practical matters of everyday life, his wife supported the family through the monopoly to sell yeast, traditionally granted to the rabbi. Once a week, the town bread merchants would provide the *rebbetzin* with flour so that she could bake the traditional challah bread for the shtetl widows and orphans. The rabbi's single mundane concern was traveling to Uman to purchase medical powders, and then going from home to home to administer the medicine to those in need.

Until the outbreak of the civil war, Jews and non-Jews had generally lived in relative harmony in the many towns and cities affected by the conflict. A survivor of the deadly Proskurov pogrom of February 1919, for example, confirmed that "The relationship between Jews and peasants . . . were excellent and most friendly throughout the thirty-two years I lived in the city . . ., I never heard of any tensions between Jews and non-Jews."[7] In Dubovo, the pre-1918 beneficial and practical economic relations smoothed religious and cultural differences, favoring tolerance and peaceful coexistence. No pogroms tarnished this equilibrium in 1881–82 or in 1905 (in Uman a pogrom took the life of three Jews in 1905).[8] Although a largely firm social and cultural divide existed between Jews and peasants, their economic liaisons were close and interdependent. The main source of income for most Jewish families was milling and selling flour. On Thursdays, peasants from surrounding villages brought their grain to the town's marketplace; Jewish merchants purchased it and retailed it through nearby cities.

The extraordinary circumstances of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution substantially altered the economic status quo, and little by little neighborly relations often broke down. Bread turned instantly into gold, and tensions over speculation and black marketing grew exponentially. As millers,

Jews had access to bread, whereas most peasants did not. Under German occupation, the economic strain in Dubovo exacerbated ethnic tensions. In turn, the occupation of the town by the Bolsheviks, perceived as a foreign rule imposed from Moscow to requisition grain and land, ignited widespread anti-Jewish sentiment. If, before 1917, Jews were largely excluded from holding government posts, and at the time of the Provisional Government, under the Central Rada, all local positions were held by Ukrainians, under Soviet rule, suddenly and for the first time Jews occupied positions of power, and were introduced as agents of state authority.

With the Bolsheviks in command, the cultural activist Gedalia Koretskii was appointed a member of the town's executive committee. Koretskii openly identified as a Zionist, and served in this position only briefly. However, with the inception of the civil war and the Bolshevik departure from Dubovo, he was remembered as the "Communist Jew," who worked for the Soviets, and was accused of planning to take over Ukraine.[9] This accusation was not made against a young Ukrainian supporter of Petliura, appointed by the Bolsheviks as Dubovo's chief of police.[10] Nobody doubted his political allegiance to the Ukrainian cause. Just as some twenty years later, in the context of World War II, in western Ukraine and Belorussia, many would understand the reality of Jews occupying positions of authority as deeply disquieting and almost offensive.[11] More than anyone else, the figure of Leon Trotsky embodied the menacing specter of an alleged Jewish political power and of a supposed unity of Jewish political concerns and interests. Slogans such as "This is for you because of Trotsky!" accompanied many pogroms.[12] In Ekaterinoslav (Dnipro), the Jewish community's delegates who protested to the local authorities for the ongoing violence were told to "go and complain to Trotsky." While encouraged by it, the association between Jews and Bolsheviks transcended the Red Army's chief. One of the Ukrainian political leaders publicly stated that the pogroms would not be stopped "as long as the Jewish youth and the Jewish working class back the Bolsheviks."[13] Anti-Jewish and anti-communist propaganda reached Dubovo as well, as local supporters of the Ukrainian cause returned to the shtetl from Uman and spread the news that "Jews and Communists are occupying Ukraine."[14]

In the absence of state infrastructure that could deter and prevent the pogrom, anti-Jewish violence erupted in Dubovo. In the words of Rachel Faygnberg, who chronicled the events in the shtetl, the whirlwind of violence took on the "speed of cinematography." Three main pogroms succeeded each other from May to August 1919, following a dynamic of killing which built on the previous massacres that took place in the region and went

unpunished.[15] The first one, a "quiet pogrom," coincided with the Bolsheviks' departure from the shtetl and the arrival of different local insurgent peasant groups, some of which were connected to the forces of the Ukrainian People's Republic headed by Petliura.[16] The killing was circumscribed to the cellars and carried out mostly by local peasants who attacked their Jewish neighbors with pitchforks and axes. Faygnberg captured the intimacy of violence and reported that, "[T]hey were all locals . . . many smeared their faces so that they would not be recognized by Dubovo Jews . . . the doctor's assistant, the mailman, the young Christian lads, killed them with cold steel."[17]

Accompanied by extensive looting, triggered by the critical loss of economic security among all social classes in and around town, the second pogrom escalated in violence. The killing and destruction became more public, as everyone adjusted to violence and brutality, lowering the moral inhibition to murder, loot, and rape. According to one account, the public slaughter became a sort of circus luring the bystanders' curious eyes.[18] The pogrom took place with the arrival in town of Cossack detachments that supported the White forces. On June 17, a number of Jews were killed in assembly-line fashion: forced toward the basement of the home of a local Jew, they were decapitated as they approached the staircase.[19] When one of the victims, who eventually survived, begged the executioners to shoot him, the answer he obtained was, "Bullets are expensive."[20]

The third pogrom, the "great one," was carried out in early August 1919 by Ataman Kozakov's insurgent forces, who fought primarily against the Red Army.[21] The available accounts capture the sheer desperation: some Jews were denied refuge by their neighbors, others were unable to flee the shtetl and join the Jewish self-defense units in the region because of the roaming gangs of bandits controlling the main roads leading to the cities.[22] Others had their secret hiding place discovered by the cry of an infant, as in the case of the "underground fortress," ingeniously built at night over the course of two months, with a complicated airshaft and light system.[23] In the hope of eluding the carnage, some Jews converted to Christianity with the help of the local priest. But once they were discovered, they were killed. More than two hundred Jews, including the rabbi, who was still wearing his tallit, were murdered at the site of the clay pit. The rabbis' son, the town's melamed, was "tortured like a communist."[24]

Violence ultimately subsided once the Bolsheviks returned to the town. Only twenty-six of the approximately 1,200 Jews who had lived in Dubovo in 1918 were alive in the shtetl by September 1919, the bulk of the community having been murdered and the rest of its members displaced as refugees. One

of the survivors, Moshe Shvartsman, the shtetl's wheelwright, who extracted the bodies from the pit and buried them in the Jewish cemetery, refused to remain in Dubovo and live among his neighbors,[25] who had either witnessed the massacre of the Jews as bystanders or had participated in the killing and looting. Despite some of his neighbors' attempts to convince him to stay (he was considered the most talented wheelwright in the shtetl and its environs), together with the surviving members of his family, Moshe Shvartsman left Dubovo. He left "the dead city" for Odessa, where, he claimed, "Russians and Ukrainians will be ashamed to carry out pogroms."[26] Two weeks after his departure, the Jewish memory of Dubovo was quickly and completely erased, as a number of local peasants destroyed the Jewish cemetery, ploughed up, and sowed it, tearing down its gravestones.[27] The place and consciousness of Jewish Dubovo was thus removed.

Epicenters of Genocidal Violence

Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, the Bolsheviks forcibly and violently Sovietized society. This process entailed, among other things, liquidating bourgeois and nationalist institutions, bringing down existing economic infrastructures, uprooting religious practices, and transforming men, women, and children into loyal Soviet citizens. As a result, many shtetls were destroyed and ceased to exist as cultural entities long before the Germans annihilated their residents during World War II.[28] But this was not always the sequence of events. By the fall of 1920 there were no more Jews living in Dubovo, which meant that the Soviets did not have to deracinate pre-revolutionary Jewish life, and that the Germans and their collaborators did not have to exterminate its Jewish population in 1941–42.[29]

The fate of Dubovo was by no means exceptional but rather typical of many Jewish settlements of Ukraine, and to some degree Belorussia, engulfed in the chaos, anarchy, and extreme violence of the civil war.[30] Many Jewish settlements, the smaller ones in particular, were, like Dubovo, obliterated. Unlike the 1900s, when anti-Jewish violence was confined mostly to the cities, in 1919–20 the shtetl became the epicenter of the pogrom.[31] The violence often spread to the cities from smaller towns, which became the stronghold of Ukrainian military groups and peasant insurgent units fighting against the Red Army. If in the cities, the central commanders of the different armies, including Petliura and Denikin, issued official proclamations condemning the pogroms and orders restraining attacks on Jews (albeit, in many instances, too late and only after the pogrom), they

refrained from doing so in the villages. They desisted from preventing, investigating, and even punishing perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence, spurred by the realization that the pogroms and ensuing looting might have been beneficial to consolidate the troops. It was easier to avoid "disagreements" with their units.[32]

Often militarized in form, anti-Jewish violence took on an unprecedented, sweeping, and all-encompassing quality, often targeting all members of the Jewish community without exception. Beginning with World War I, the degree of violence intensified at each stage of the conflict, following each military occupation, until the return of the Bolsheviks. Jews experienced the violence as genocidal. A number of Jewish communities, including those of Ekaterinoslav, Kharkov (Kharkiv), and Rostov, addressed a memorandum to general Denikin in a desperate attempt to convince him to put an end to the violence; they acknowledged that, "Everywhere, wherever the Volunteer Army set foot, the systematic and more or less complete annihilation of the Jewish population took—and is taking—place."[33] Sexual violence against Jewish girls and women, often carried out in public, in the presence of parents, relatives, and neighbors, became an all too common feature of the pogroms of the civil war. Although the majority of these crimes remained undisclosed, as the victims and their families attempted to conceal the rape as much as possible, nearly every report on pogroms contained reference to sexual violence.[34]

In many instances, the rape of Jewish women was employed as a systematic weapon of war to promote ethnic cleansing.[35] In her harrowing account of the events in the shtetl of Terevo, in the district of Mozyr, in Belorussia, the pogrom survivor Hasia Kvetnaia described the mass rape of Jewish girls and women, "who were all led to a separate room, with a bed, were laid across the bed, and raped one after the other. . . . All women were taken into the room three or four times. Two girls were torn to pieces and [their bodies] were thrown out."[36] A report about the pogrom events in Smotrich (Smotrych), in the district of Proskurov, recorded that "Many women were assaulted, several were assaulted by ten and more Cossacks one after another; some were infected with venereal disease."[37] Dated August 6, 1919, an official communication to the Ministry for Jewish Affairs acknowledged that the cases of assaults on women were "unspeakable."[38] In this context of growing violence, traumatized by loss and terror, most Jews chose to support the Bolsheviks. Searching for protection or revenge, and hoping to see an end to the looting, rape, and murder, Jews made the practical choice of forging an alliance with the nascent Soviet power.

Choosing the Lesser of Two Evils, or How the Pogroms Made Jews Soviet

The relationship between Jews and the state reached a new stage in the midst of the civil war, when, from 1918 to 1921, the pervasiveness, violence, and ferocity of the anti-Jewish pogroms sparked the Soviet-Jewish alliance. The unprecedented qualitative and quantitative nature of the pogroms, and the dynamics they set in motion, shaped the relationship between Jews and the new Bolshevik power structures, and influenced the process of Jewish integration and acculturation into the Soviet system. By the second decade of the twentieth century, Jews were largely estranged from the tsarist state, and skeptical of the traditional strategy of proving their loyalty and utility to the regime under which they lived. But by the end of 1919 they began to perceive Bolshevik power as a source of protection.

Of course, the alliance between Jews and the Soviet state was only nominally forged by the frustration for the intensity of tsarist anti-Jewish discrimination. In 1917 most Jews across the political spectrum were anti-Bolshevik. Things changed drastically in 1919, when the dilemma of one alternative led many to embrace the Bolsheviks. In June 1919, the representative of the coalition of the socialist parties in Kamenets-Podolsk (Kamyanets-Podylskyi), in western Ukraine, which included Bundists and Socialist-Zionists, admitted with regret the defection of Jews to the Bolshevik side: "The horrific anti-Jewish pogroms that took place throughout the Jewish cities [of Ukraine] have estranged the Jews from the Ukrainian force and strengthened the support for the Bolsheviks among the Jewish revolutionary proletariat."[39] In mid-1919, the Central Committee of the Bund declared its support for the Party members' mobilization in the Red Army, opting for the less harmful of two possible choices and urging the Jewish proletariat to fight on behalf of Soviet power. In the same vein, a pro-communist Yiddish publication reminded Jews that "It is better to die as heroes, than to live a disgusting life!" and incited them to join the Red Army in order to fight against the pogrom gangs.[40]

The words of a young Jew from Kamenets-Podolsk—where the Bolsheviks prevented the Ukrainian forces from carrying out a pogrom—capture the necessary choice made by most Jews at the time: "Every day, and every hour, the news of more and more pogroms perpetrated by the Ukrainian forces reached my native city . . . 300 Jews had been killed or wounded in Balta . . ., in the shtetl of Felshtin, so close to us, 600 Jews had been murdered . . . From day to day we awaited . . . in terror . . . [until] the Bolsheviks succeeded in their strategic maneuver and forced the Ukrainians to leave Kamenets

[without a pogrom]." Even when the neighbors' behavior hindered the scale of the pogrom, deterring the violence by assisting Jews as opposed to escalating it, the short- and long-term emotional effect of terror swayed many into supporting the Bolsheviks. In his autobiographical account the young Jew from Kamenets-Podolsk underscored how difficult it was for many to accept the Bolsheviks: "They did not want them; but the knowledge that [the Bolsheviks] had saved them from the day-to-day expectation of death at the hands of the Haidamaks, forced them to forget about everything that the Bolsheviks stood for. The majority of the Jewish population welcomed the new ravishers and chose the lesser of two evils."[41]

The pogroms changed the Jewish political landscape, altering the Jewish elite's popular opinion, which had been consistently anti-Bolshevik. In the beginning very few Jews supported the Evsektsiia, the Jewish section of the Communist Party, established in the fall of 1918 to spread communism among the Jewish masses, but by 1919 many came to support the communist organization. Staunch Bundists like Moshe Rafes and Ester Frumkin adjusted their political orientation and became more compliant with Soviet power, also as a result of the anti-Jewish violence that shook Ukraine and Belorussia. Ester Frumkin was particularly concerned with the widespread rape of Jewish women and girls.[42]

The violence affected neighborly relations. In countless localities, the hostility on the part of the neighbors, who had either carried out or witnessed the violence and looting during the pogroms, ultimately strengthened the Jewish alliance with the Soviets. The Bolshevik campaign against antisemitism during and after the pogroms reinforced the reality of a Soviet-Jewish alliance. The condemnation of antisemitism was a key rupture in the politics and manifestations of antisemitism that occurred from late Imperial Russia to the Bolshevik regime. The aggressive struggle against antisemitism inevitably curbed and changed expressions of antisemitism, especially in the 1920s and early 1930s. Naturally there were significant limits to this alliance, which often remained only partial: many Jews could not accept Soviet power, and in the early years of the Bolshevik experiment Zionist and Orthodox Jews emigrated or worked underground, in opposition to the system.[43] On their end, the Soviets could not accept all Jews because of the ruling principle of class conflict: many Jews, "bourgeois," religious, and Zionist were persecuted early on by Soviet power. Finally, the Soviet state forged the alliance through ambivalence: while it agreed to it in the name of the ideological rejection of antisemitism, and because of its desperate need for allies (and through the Jews it hoped to gain the support of a potentially useful and loyal group), the Soviet

state was also driven by the concerted effort to distance itself from its role of "protector" of Jews because of the widespread identification of Bolshevism with Jewry, which would harm its broader popularity. This effort emerged as a major consideration in particular after the civil war, when the Soviets were faced with the challenge of building a new society grounded in the principles of Bolshevism.

The enemies of the Revolution—the Whites and the Ukrainian nationalists, but also the German and Polish armies at the end of World War I and in the midst of the Polish-Soviet war—equated the Bolsheviks and the Jews labeling Bolshevism as a quintessentially Jewish doctrine, namely "foreign," "other," and "evil."[44] They identified the Bolsheviks as Jews in 1917–18, when there were very few Jewish Bolsheviks and when the hostility toward Bolsheviks was not that prevalent and entrenched: taking advantage of widespread and deep-set popular antisemitism, they wished to discredit Lenin's forces by identifying them as Jews. Of course, the mythic image of the Jewish revolutionary, set to destroy Russia, dated back to the early 1900s when the slogan "Beat the Yids and save Russia" had become exceptionally popular in right-wing political circles. This deep-seated legacy, together with Lenin's official condemnation of antisemitism in 1918, and the remarkable number of Jews who eventually joined the Bolshevik ranks made the identification of Jews and Bolshevism palatable and commonsensical for the Revolution's opponents. The association between Jews and communism had become all the more widespread following the active propaganda campaign pursued by the German and Austrian armies in 1918, and by the White army in 1919 in particular.[45] The objective was now to arouse hostility toward the Jews by identifying them as Bolsheviks: in 1919, this meant that there was an enemy (Jews) in the people's midst, and that it needed to be treated with military violence.[46]

The Chomskii Trial

Ukrainian forces involved in the conflict also employed anti-Bolshevik propaganda that identified the Reds with Jews. They built on the widespread notion that the Revolution represented the Jewish attempt to seize political power. Indeed, joining the Bolshevik ranks could result in heightened visibility and empowerment for Jews, and for that matter for non-Jews as well. A noteworthy example of this kind of propaganda was the so-called Chomskii trial. Elias Tcherikower defined it as the pinnacle of the Petliura regime, and

compared it to the 1894 Dreyfus Affair in France and to the 1913 Beilis trial in tsarist Russia.[47] In the summer of 1919, as they entered Kamenets-Podolsk, Petliura's forces arrested Alexander Chomskii, a young member of the local self-defense unit which had been dispatched by the Bolsheviks to a nearby shtetl to strengthen their cause against the enemies of the Revolution. In a staged military trial, Chomskii was accused of being a Bolshevik leader in the struggle against Ukrainian independence. Held in the local theater near the central train station, the trial was intended to publicly ratify the connection between Jews and Bolshevism. The accusation was so absurd and the evidence of fabrication so tangible—the Chomskii family was one of the most affluent in the city, and notably opposed to Bolshevik policies—that Petliura himself eventually attempted to quell the allegations and dispute the military's partisanship.

The Chomskii trial proceeded nonetheless, amidst false witnesses, theatrical lawfulness, and an outpouring of public protest both from the Jewish and the Ukrainian local intelligentsia. The fictitious evidence used in the trial included a receipt that showed that the Chomskii family had donated large amounts of money to the Bolsheviks. With extensive coverage in the press, news about the trial echoed well beyond Kamenets-Podolsk. Detained in prison for months, the "Jewish Bolshevik" was released only following the evacuation of the Ukrainian forces from the city.[48] It was probably no coincidence that Nikolai Krasovskii, who at the time of the Beilis Affair served as the chief detective of the Kiev Police Department, became the foremost investigator and one of the impassioned architects of the fabricated Chomskii Affair. Perhaps also because of his involvement, the Chomskii case came to be known as "the second Beilis Affair in Ukraine."[49]

The choice by Jews to side with the Bolsheviks emboldened propaganda efforts like the Chomskii Affair. Hundreds of young Jews yearned to avenge the violence of the pogroms by joining Soviet forces. This choice confirmed, and further promoted, the charge that Jews supported communism.[50] The number of Jews who rushed to join the Red Army against the Ukrainian and White pogromists was so great that the Soviets created a special recruitment section for this purpose. They established a Jewish War Section in the Red Army to train and absorb Yiddish-speaking men (and in rare instances women). It was the pogroms of the civil war that ultimately enticed so many Jews to fight on the side of the world Revolution, to wage a war against the counter-revolution, and to forge an alliance with the Soviet state. The pogroms made Jews Soviet.

Central or Local Authorities?

"War" and "peace" are not mutually exclusive phenomena in history but are rather intimately related—even more so in the society that the Bolsheviks strove to build following the years 1918–21, when peace became the continuation of war by other means.[51] In this society the use of violence against enemies real or imagined became embedded in governance, and crisis mentality, which warranted summary justice and suspiciousness, was ubiquitous. The synergy between this society at war, and the memory and trauma of the civil war, not only played out in the relations between Soviet citizens but also defined the relations between citizens and the centers of power.

The pogroms destabilized the ties between Jews and their neighbors, deteriorating the largely peaceful balance that existed prior to 1918. Most accounts reveal in fact the surprise and the resentment for the sudden change in the relations and attitudes of non-Jews toward their Jewish neighbors. When on July 16, 1919, in the town of Ovruch, in the Zhitomir (Zhytomyr) province of northern Ukraine, Chana Gozman and her children sought refuge from the looming pogrom among good acquaintances and friends, begging for shelter and a hiding place, she was turned away.[52] In one account of the pogrom in Obodivko (Obodivka)—a shtetl located about twelve kilometers from Trostianets (Trostyanets), in Podolia, which was completely destroyed on May 10, 1919—the author captured his disbelief over the neighbors' behavior as follows: "our peasants, who in previous years had lived in good relations with us, helped out [the Ukrainian forces] . . . and engaged in such wild murder that it is hard to understand what took hold of them."[53] The anti-Jewish violence unbridled during the pogroms also influenced the dynamics between Jews and local authorities, whose members were more often than not the same neighbors.

Pledging loyalty to the Soviet state and joining its infrastructure meant not only empowerment and, for many, revenge; it meant primarily protection. In a passionate proclamation of allegiance to the Soviet state dated 1922, the parishioners of the main synagogue in Moscow used the pogroms to underscore their loyalty to the new system.[54] When a group of Jewish workers publicly demanded to turn the great synagogue on Maroseika Street, Spasoglinischevsky Lane, into a club, the synagogue's religious leaders addressed the People's Commissar of Justice arguing that such a decision would "deprive Jews from fulfilling their spiritual needs" and would contravene the principles of freedom of conscience granted by the Soviet Constitution.[55] The petition also emphasized the specific role played by the synagogue, which

served not only as a house of prayer but also as a cultural space where the Jewish proletariat (artisans, workers, and small peddlers) could find "solace from deprivations in life." While the petition was used as a calculated diplomatic tool to reject the transformation of the synagogue into a proletarian space (and in that respect it was successful), it reveals how entrenched was the memory of the Bolsheviks as the ones who defended and rescued the Jews at the time of the civil war. The leaders of the Moscow synagogue wrote,

> One should not forget that the Jewish masses support Soviet power more than all other sections of the population, because they personally experienced the horrors of the counterrevolution . . . the victims of the counterrevolutionary pogroms carried out by the armies of Petliura, Grigorev, Denikin, whose slogan was 'down with the Jews and the Communists,' are in the hundreds of thousands . . . the Jewish population of innumerable cities and shtetls in southern and central Russia sought refuge from the approaching bands behind the walls of their synagogues . . . in tens of cases thousands of Jews—together with their wives and children—were tortured to death in their synagogues as they raised their prayer to the heavens to precipitate the coming of the Red Army detachments . . . Jewish masses see in the Soviet power their protector, who saved them . . . from physical annihilation.[56]

This powerful statement of allegiance to the Soviet state, envisioned as the entity that would prevent further anti-Jewish violence, echoed through an embellished reference to the synagogue building's history. Hounded by tsarist authorities since the early 1890s, when Jews were expelled en masse from Moscow, the synagogue was allowed to function beginning in 1907, "under the influence of the revolutionary movement. . . . Closed by the Tsar," continued the petition, "it was reopened by the revolution—a symbol of tsarist persecution in the past, [the synagogue] became a symbol of freedom in the present."[57] What is remarkable is that the commitment to the alliance with the Soviet state was voiced by the leadership of the Moscow synagogue, not by Jewish communists and avowed atheists.

From the beginning, the likelihood of successfully contesting antisemitism in the Soviet Union hinged more on central authorities than on local ones. Whether they were dealing with instances of anti-Jewish violence or with cases of restitution of property looted in the wake of the civil war, Jews had a better chance of seeing their grievances met by turning to Soviet central authorities than relying on the benevolence of local authorities. Even the

Moscow Jewish community, in its 1922 petition, acknowledged the role that central institutions of power had in swaying local authorities into appeasing harsh policies related to the Jews. More specifically, the Moscow synagogue blamed the local and regional executive committees of cities and towns like Vitebsk (Vitsebsk), Minsk, Gomel, Smolensk, Kiev (Kyiv), Konotop, Odessa, Taganrog, Rechitsa (Rechytsa), Simferopol, and Klimov, for closing down Jewish houses of prayer, and it turned to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party to intervene and put an end to the requisition.[58]

Central authorities would usually rein in the antisemitism of local authorities and chastise the latter's disregard of the Jewish complaint as unimportant. From the Ukrainian capital Kharkov, the Commission on the National Minorities of the Ukrainian Executive Committee warned against the all too frequent instances of antisemitism. In particular, the reports from 1924 and 1925 criticized the specious conduct of local authorities, who repeatedly displayed arbitrariness and infringed upon revolutionary legality when dealing with the Jewish population of the shtetl. According to the 1925 report, these violations were recorded mainly among police authorities and finance inspectors. The National Minorities Commission instructed the local authorities in charge to take the necessary steps and report any misconduct to the central authorities, including the office of the chief prosecutor of Ukraine and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD).[59] Disputes over the nature of civil rights and the place of Jews in the new society forged out of destruction were not immediately solvable without the intervention of central authorities. Even many months after the end of the civil conflict, issues related to antisemitism and property restitution turned out to be a major source of contention between the local authorities and the central power.

Located forty miles from Kirovgrad (Kirovohrad), in central Ukraine, Znamyanka had been the site of a violent pogrom in May 1919, when troops loyal to Ataman Nikifor Grigoriev controlled the town.[60] In the summer of 1922, the Department of National Minorities of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of Ukraine received a complaint. The head of the Jewish religious community of Znamyanka, A. D. Berboskii, protested the expulsion of Jews from the town. The NKVD sent at once a commission to Znamyanka to investigate the matter and determine whether this was simply slander on the part of the Jewish religious community or if this was indeed a case of "antisemitism on the part of the local authorities," who violated the official policy against anti-Jewish violence. From the Ukrainian capital of Kharkov, the NKVD dispatched to the town an investigative commission, made up of regional authorities, and including the chief prosecutor in the region.[61] It also

addressed two telegrams to the local authorities, with orders to terminate immediately the expulsion of Jews from Znamyanka.[62]

Impoverished by the extortions ("contributions") that each occupying army and insurgent group demanded in exchange for protection, and with their property looted and destroyed, many Jews undersold their homes and fled to nearby cities. Following the violence, many of them returned to their towns of residence. In the case of Znamyanka, it is likely that Jews who escaped the pogrom by joining a Jewish self-defense battalion, or by fleeing to the city of Kremenchug (Kremenchuk) or Kirovgrad as refugees, returned to the town, for lack of better options. At least some of their neighbors, in particular those who took advantage of the anti-Jewish violence, were most likely displeased by this return. Some of them might have pressured the local authorities into issuing an order expelling all Jews. The order combined together the reality of the pogroms of the civil war with the memory of the anti-Jewish legal restrictions sanctioned by the tsarist May Laws.[63]

But just like Jews elsewhere, the Jews of Znamyanka quickly learned that whenever local authorities brushed aside their grievances, they could turn in protest to central authorities and hope for success. In late September 1922, the juridical office of the NKVD harshly condemned the order issued by the Znamyanka Executive Committee regarding the expulsion of "those who do not have the right of residence." The NKVD defined this as one of the worse "expressions of tsarism, [it was] similar to the Pale of Settlement, something absolutely unacceptable under the Soviets, which discredits our authority. . . . [T]hese were the exact same terms used under the tsar to discriminate against the Jews . . . and can have the most appalling consequences for the Jewish population. It is imperative to find out and expose those personally responsible for issuing the order."[64]

Property Restitution

"The Cossacks are approaching, they are coming . . . I'm running away! I am writing my last line . . . it's midnight . . . [and] Russia is celebrating the New Year, the year is 1920."[65] These are the words of Rachel Faygnberg, who survived the anti-Jewish violence in the Odessa region. Like thousands of other refugees, Faygnberg managed to reach the Romanian border. She was lucky enough to make her way into Poland and eventually get to the Land of Israel. But of the hundreds of thousands whose lives were affected by the civil war, the majority stayed in the territories that would eventually become the Soviet Union.

In September 1919, one of the most brutal pogroms in central Ukraine took place in Fastov (Fastiv), a town located at a railway junction, approximately seventy kilometers from Kiev. With a Jewish population of 7,000, in the early 1900s there were six synagogues and two Jewish schools in Fastov. On the eve of the pogrom there were between 10,000 and 12,000 Jews living in the town, with several thousand Jewish refugees who had fled there from other shtetls and cities in the Kiev province in the wake of the pogroms.[66] Carried out by Denikin's troops, the pogrom resulted in the murder of approximately 1,500 Jews (according to some sources there might have been 2,000 victims), the public rape of an unidentified number of women, and the death of hundreds as a result of wounds and epidemics suffered during the attack.[67] As recorded by the different organizations engaged in collecting witness accounts and providing support for the victims, the extent of destruction, damage, and loss of property was extraordinary. Only one hundred of the six hundred Jewish homes that existed before the pogrom were intact in 1923.[68]

As in most genocidal contexts of the twentieth century, during the Fastov pogrom of September 22–27 the killing became increasingly public, and the brutality escalated removing all inhibitions. Anti-Jewish violence coincided



A memorial procession of hundreds of women and men commemorates the victims of the pogrom in Fastov, in central Ukraine. Members of the community carry the remains of the victims, covered by prayer shawls (bottom left and right), as a number of Red Army soldiers are visible standing in the crowd. The banner in Yiddish reads: "In memory of those killed during the pogrom, September 1919, in Fastov." *(Elias Tcherikower Collection, RG 80-89, p. 54883, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York)*

with the Bolsheviks' departure from the shtetl and the arrival of the Ukrainian forces of the Ukrainian People's Republic headed by Petliura, in the spring of 1919, and later with the onset of the White Army forces, in August 1919. Both occupations were interspersed with the presence of the Bolsheviks, who engaged in violence against those deemed enemies of the Revolution. The local Jewish population, which over the course of the previous months had suffered greatly at the hands of the Ukrainian forces and of different local insurgent peasant groups, hoped that the Volunteer Army would put an end to the ongoing confiscation, requisition, and looting. In fact the military authorities ignored the complaints and petitions of the Jewish population. According to several accounts, what most encouraged the soldiers to engage in plunder, extortions, and rape with impunity was the behavior of their own superiors.[69] In the words of one of the witnesses to the events in Fastov, "By the end of the pogrom, [they] had so much money in their possession that they did not know what to do with it. . . . Most families were trapped and then burnt alive in their own homes. Pogromists frequently executed their victims directly in the synagogue where poor residents sought protection."[70]

Mass rape precipitated and facilitated genocidal violence in Fastov.[71] The political activist Emma Goldman, who traveled from the United States to Ukraine during the civil war, captured the female dimension of violence. She described the trauma of mass rape experienced by Jewish women in Fastov:

> There were more women about than men, and I was especially struck by the strange expression in their eyes. They did not look you full in the face; they shared past you with a dumb, hunted animal expression . . . Not a woman, young or old, that had not been outraged, most of them in the very sight of their fathers, husbands, and brothers. The young girls, some of them mere children, had suffered repeated violation at the hands of the Denikin soldiers. I understood the dreadful look in the eyes of the women of Fastov.[72]

The fate of Fastov, once a prosperous town, impoverished and reduced to less than one-third of its former population by the war, was analogous to that of other Jewish settlements in Ukraine. Even here the hostility on the part of the neighbors, who participated in the violence, strengthened the alliance with the Soviets, and made the cooperation between Jews and non-Jews strained and even impossible. In the words of a witness to the pogroms carried out in 1919 in the region of Uman, in central Ukraine, "This is what happened in Ladyzhenko, Mankovko, Dubovo, Ivanko, Buky, Talne and wherever else

Jews lived . . . together with the peasants who arrived from the surrounding villages, those who participated in the pogrom and in the murder were also the peasants who were fellow villagers of the Jews, often their neighbors, who had known them for decades."[73]

Terrorized by the violence, or driven by the desire to join the Jewish self-defense units, fight back, and take revenge, many Jews fled Fastov. As the war subsided, with few available alternatives, and counting on the new regime's commitment to fight antisemitism, many returned to the shtetl. Here, in the midst of trauma, the refugees faced extensive loss of property. Jews could not return to their homes because they had been occupied or purchased at a fictitious cost by their neighbors, who were often unwilling to return the property. As a 1923 report on the situation in Fastov by the American relief organization Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) noted, "the greatest obstacle to the reconstruction of normal conditions of life in the town is the housing problem and the shortage of houses under which the Jewish population of the town is living now."[74] Returning to their place of residence (and the spaces of killing) entailed struggling to reclaim property, and it meant relying on Soviet central authorities.

Issues of restitution exacerbated antisemitism. The restitution crisis was so pervasive that Soviet law had to acknowledge it: in early 1921 a Soviet decree invalidated all real estate transactions completed after January 1, 1919—that is, during the peak of anti-Jewish violence. Thus, the legitimate property owners had the legal right to reclaim their home.[75] But this was not always easy. Local authorities—who might have been related to those neighbors who took over Jewish property, or might have themselves occupied Jewish homes—tended to disregard the law. So the Jews had to turn to central authorities who usually enforced it.

In mid-1923, a number of Fastov Jewish residents addressed a memorandum to the central authorities in the Ukrainian capital city, asking for help in solving the property restitution crisis. In their appeal to the central authorities, the Jewish residents of Fastov solicited the People's Commissariat of Justice to provide to the local courts specific guidelines on the restitution of real estate to the pogrom victims, with some urgency. In response to the appeal, on May 15, the authorities in Kharkov expressed their concern over the way in which property restitution (of homes in particular) to Jewish refugees was handled in the provinces. According to the official notice to the local authorities, Jewish homes had been taken over by the neighbors during and immediately after the pogrom, as their owners fled or were killed. In some instances, desperate Jews had undersold their property for a trifling sum on

the eve of their frenzied departure.[76] As of early May of that year, eighty-nine registered houses had been sold by the Fastov pogrom victims, during the forbidden period, in exchange for several kilograms of flour, as they fled in fear of another pogrom. Most of them were widows and orphans who lived in deplorable conditions. The document explained the neighbors' behavior in political terms, branding the new owners as "the kulak peasant population" who had exploited the situation and had prevented so many Jews from returning to their homes. Soviet central authorities reprimanded the local courts: they were too slow in solving the conflicts over property ownership. In some instances, the legal process had extended for a year and a half, without even reaching a resolution.[77]

Countering cases of antisemitism ultimately depended on the response and involvement of central authorities. Therefore, the stronger and more centralized the state and its infrastructure, the more unlikely was the eruption of anti-Jewish violence. This phenomenon can be explained, at least in part, by the following facts: first of all, Jews generally came to serve in central and regional positions of power, rather than in local power; second, the Bolsheviks in the central and regional authorities had many years of experience working with Jews in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) and in the Bolshevik movement; and third, local authorities were more often than not ideologically ignorant and deficient, and did not understand the nature of the new regime, including its opposition to antisemitism. The Soviet state was a key factor in successfully deterring public anti-Jewish violence and preventing pogroms.[78] Anti-Jewish violence did occur in the Soviet lands, usually where the state infrastructure was weaker. The weak state infrastructure was, for example, a contributing factor in the eruption of anti-Jewish violence in the Soviet regions of Central Asia and in the Caucasus, and specifically in the outbreak of a number of pogroms that occurred in 1926, 1928, and 1929, in Margelan, Uzbekistan, and in Dagestan.[79]

Trauma and the Making of Soviet Jewry

What was the legacy of the civil war pogroms for Soviet Jews? One might claim that Jews, especially the younger generations, were eager to move out of the territories of the former Pale of Settlement (including Dubovo, Znamyanka, Fastov, and the hundreds of towns and cities across Ukraine and Belorussia) and relocate to larger and more modern cities; that they were hungry for upward mobility, for more profitable and satisfying employment, and that they enthusiastically embraced communism, enticed by the promise of social

justice and national equality. The new system was unquestionably impatient to employ and engage young Jews. Based on the events of the civil war, the Soviets had reservations about the political allegiance of Poles, Ukrainians, and even Russians. On the other hand, they saw in the Jews a potentially loyal ally also because of the specific treatment they endured under the tsar.

But the truth is that hundreds of thousands of Jews flocked, or rather fled, to larger urban centers, beyond the confines of the shtetl, the town, the city, or the region of the Pale of Settlement, also because of the pogroms, because of the intensity of destruction and murder not devoid of the complicity of some of their neighbors.[80] They fled the intimacy of murder in the "cities of death," just as Moshe Shvartsman did when he decided to leave Dubovo and relocate to Odessa. This response is by no means surprising. A 1922 Soviet report described the post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by the residents of one town in Podolia as follows: "[T]he general shattered condition of the nerves and the slovenly and destitute state caused by the secretive life of hiding in cellars and dens, led to an epidemic of illness in the devastated shtetl. The experience of terror and shame intensify the chance of disease, increase the death rate and the panic . . ., and all this drives the population to deep pessimism verging on despair."[81] The magnitude of the trauma endured by Jews during the pogroms can be measured by the demographic Revolution that ensued the violence.[82] The statistics from the 1926 Soviet census capture the extent to which Jews took refuge from trauma relocating to larger cities. For example, in the district of Proskurov, in central Ukraine, an area severely affected by the violence,[83] the Jewish population decreased by 10 percent from 1897 to 1926. The refugee crisis and "the upsurge in the death rate caused by the pogroms, which upset the Jewish population's natural growth," determined the momentous decline.[84] As the Soviet demographer acknowledged, the drop in the Jews' natural growth produced a general loss of population as high as 24 percent.[85]

Rape propelled relocation. Whether it was deliberately employed against Jews as a strategic instrument of ethnic cleansing, as a way to settle previous unresolved accounts between neighbors, or as a way to confront an alleged class or a political enemy, the physical and psychological trauma associated with rape is one of the key factors that elicited the Revolution in the Jewish demographic landscape during and following 1918–21.[86] The 1926 birth rate statistics for the inhabitants of the Proskurov district reflect the legacy of rape for Jewish women compared to women of other nationalities. Jewish women's birth rate dropped alarmingly: if the number of births per 1,000 women (ages between fifteen and forty-nine) amounted to 145.5 for Ukrainian women and

110.1 for Polish women, for Jewish women it reached only 82.2. To explain this plunge in the birth rate the Soviet demographer who collected the data referred to the physical and psychological damage experienced by the Jewish group during the pogroms, hinting to the fact that Jewish women had been targeted for systematic sexual violence. He also acknowledged the drop in the number of Jewish men, who, in many localities, had been earmarked for murder because of their gender.[87]

The intensification of sexual violence against Jewish women during the pogroms not only broke down moral order and kinship structure. It also served as a powerful thrust for thousands to leave the towns and cities of the former Pale of Settlement. Acknowledging that most instances of sexual violence was carried out by groups of eight to ten men against one Jewish girl or woman, one of the doctors treating rape victims in the city of Cherkassy admitted that, so many of them "try to leave these places . . . plagued by the horrifying memories of rape."[88] Mass rape became a driving force in the urbanization process of Soviet Jews, indirectly increasing the pace of acculturation and Sovietization, and ultimately contributing to the making of Soviet Jewry.[89]

While Jewish women and girls had been the target of sexual violence before, in particular during the earlier waves of pogroms in 1903–6, moving away from the site of trauma had not always been a real option under the tsar. After 1921, when rape had become an intrinsic aspect of the rituals of violence embedded in the pogrom, relocation became indeed a tangible option. The rape (or the fear of rape) of daughters, sisters, and wives was a decisive factor in encouraging many to leave: resettlement to Moscow or Leningrad or other larger urban centers became a preemptive measure in the hope that violence would not occur again in the future.[90] For many the only conceivable response to the trauma experienced during the pogroms was the emotional resettlement made of oblivion: suppressing the memory of violence could be attained through a successful horizontal socialization, a rapprochement with non-Jews through intermarriage and assimilation, but only elsewhere, in the larger metropolises, and in combination with a symbiotic relationship with the Bolshevik state.

Thus the face of Russian Jewry—or those Jews who had lived within the geopolitical context of tsarist Russia until the Bolshevik Revolution—changed not only because of the remarkable opportunities and the euphoria sparked by the communist ideals embodied in the new system. It was transformed also by the violence of the pogroms. These eased and hastened Sovietization, as thousands fled the sites of trauma, and thousands forged an alliance with

the Soviet state to make sure this would not happen again. Just as in previous centuries, relying on the "vertical alliance" with the ruling power, which laid at the core of life in the diaspora, became the most effective strategy for the Jews to guarantee their physical protection, even in the Soviet context.[91] In the immediate aftermath of the exclusionary violence unleashed by the civil war, the Jews' impulse to align themselves with state power accelerated their Sovietization, through trauma.[92]

Dislocated and displaced by the pogroms, hundreds of thousands of Jews were forced to begin a new life. Jewish refugees moved back to Fastov, or settled there from nearby shtetls, or fled the town wrapped in the memory of violence for larger cities. Whether they stayed, returned, or left, they carried with them the memory of the pogroms for decades to come. Describing the aftermath of the Fastov pogrom, Emma Goldman captured the essence of the Soviet-Jewish alliance: "Only one bright spot there was in the horrible picture, no pogroms had taken place under the Bolsheviks. The gratitude of the Fastov Jews was pathetic. They clung to the Communists as to a saving straw. It was encouraging to think that the Bolshevik regime was at least free from that worst of all Russian curses, pogroms against Jews."[93] Strong in her anti-Soviet position, the anarchist thinker described the Jews' appreciation for the new political power, which had put an end to the pogroms, with some skepticism.

This was the same skepticism that more than two decades later, Hannah Arendt voiced when discussing the destructive consequences of Jewish ties to state power. The German Jewish philosopher was referring to German Jews and their responsibility in their own downfall because of the symbiotic relationship with the German state.[94] Historian Yosef Haim Yersushalmi took issue with Arendt's position, reminding us that nothing could have prepared the Jews of Germany for genocide. In the same way, one should remember that nothing could have prepared for the extreme violence of the Bolshevik system those Jews who, for lack of alternatives or for choice, remained in the Soviet lands. In particular, when their support for the system grew out of necessity and was forged through anti-Jewish violence. Jews quite literally required the state in order to regain membership in a society so deeply shrouded by violence. At the same time, however, if the Jewish alliance with the state entailed equality and empowerment, protection from neighbors and local authorities, it was not unfailing, and it came with a price.

2 THE AFTERLIFE OF THE BEILIS AFFAIR

THE BLOOD LIBEL IN THE SOVIET UNION

In late Imperial Russia, a noticeably tight link emerged between accusations of blood libel and instances of anti-Jewish violence. A missing Christian child, allegedly taken by the Jews for ritual needs, could easily serve as a catalyst and justify attacks on the Jewish population. This synergy between myth and violence became all too common during the political unrest and socioeconomic turmoil that sparked waves of anti-Jewish violence in 1881–82, 1903, and 1905–6. At the time of the civil war, the White Army occasionally incorporated the blood legend in its anti-Jewish propaganda, and used it to condemn Judaism and delegitimize Bolshevism, and to embolden the local population to partake in the violence.[1]

This is not surprising given the White movement's intimacy with Russian Orthodox Church leaders and former members of the Black Hundreds, the ultra-nationalist and antisemitic forces responsible for inciting pogroms during the first two decades of the twentieth century.[2] And since the words "Bolshevik" and "Jew" were all too frequently interchangeable, and the struggle against the Bolsheviks intermingled with a struggle against the Jews, then political anti-Soviet propaganda could easily overlap with more traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes such as the blood libel. In Mogilev (Mahilyow), for example, supporters of the military commander of the Volunteer Army, Lavr Kornilov, launched a pogrom appealing to the "truth" that Jews "snatch children and use their blood as food together with matzah."[3] Anti-Bolshevik propaganda disseminated by voices supporting Petliura also drew from the blood legend trope. Appeals by military chaplains, for example, reminded Ukrainians that "the Bolsheviks, especially the Jews Lenin and Trotsky, represented the anti-Christ and would torture and kill Ukrainian children." This allegation was built on

Legacy of Blood. Elissa Bemporad, Oxford University Press (2019). © Oxford University Press.
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the notion of Jews as Christ-killers, with the blood libel as the reenactment of the killing of Christ.[4]

The claim of Jewish ritual murder did not dissipate following the Bolshevik victory against their enemies. It persisted with varying degrees of intensity depending on where and when it occurred. But with few exceptions, under the Soviets the blood libel did not culminate in a pogrom, as it often did in neighboring Poland and Romania, where state authorities showed some tolerance of public attacks and displays of violence against the Jewish minority. In the Soviet Union, the state conveyed from the outset its condemnation of the blood libel as the product of reactionary tsarist Russia. It did this by confronting the legacy of the Beilis Affair head-on.

The 1911–13 Beilis affair, with the sensational Kiev trial of Menachem Mendl Beilis, accused of carrying out the murder of a Ukrainian boy for Jewish ritual needs, was likely the most notorious blood libel accusation in interwar modern Europe. Leon Trotsky himself, who typically shunned any reference to his Jewish background, spoke out fervently against the Beilis case, criticizing the tsarist legal system and branding antisemitism as a political tool in the hands of the counter-revolution. Lenin was intensely aware of the details about the tarnished investigation, of the involvement of corrupted local and central authorities, and of the staged trial. Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, his personal secretary and a member of the editorial board of *Pravda* since 1912, researched and wrote a lengthy study about the Beilis case based on his experience in Kiev at the time of the trial.[5]

The events surrounding the Beilis case had captured the attention of many intellectuals at the time. Taking advantage of the new censorship laws introduced by the 1917 February Revolution, writer and art historian Nikolai Breshko-Breshkovskii directed a short film featuring the Beilis Affair. Entitled *Vera Cheberiak and the Blood Libel* (*Vera Cheberiak: krovavyi navet*) the silent film with Russian subtitles was intended as a realistic rendition of the events. It was shot entirely in Kiev, in the same buildings in which the defendant had lived and worked, and at the same location where the lifeless body of the Ukrainian child was found. But shortly thereafter the film was withdrawn from movie theaters. In March 1917, the temporary executive committee of Kino-Soiuz (Film Union) deemed the screening unacceptable, primarily because it incited "national hatred."[6] The film's distribution could lead to Jewish hatred of Ukrainians, Ukrainian hatred of Jews (by those who believed the blood libel), or to both. This was a few months before the outbreak of the Russian Civil War, and the beginning of the most violent anti-Jewish pogroms prior to World War II.[7]

The author and politician Bonch-Bruevich wrote about the blood libel in the midst of the civil conflict. He described the anti-Jewish atmosphere that seized Petrograd in 1918 as similar to what he had experienced in Kiev on the eve of the Beilis trial. It was an atmosphere laden with judeophobia, hatred, and rumors against Jews.[8] It seemed, argued Bonch-Bruevich, that "[I]n [many] places people were again reminded of the Beilis case, which . . . we had [mistakenly] deemed forgotten."[9]

But the Bolsheviks had certainly not forgotten. As soon as they occupied Kiev, in February 1918, they arrested Vera Cheberiak, the head of the Kiev criminal gang responsible for the boy's murder and the fabrication of the case against Mendl Beilis. At the time of the original 1911–13 trial, Cheberiak did not face any charges (local police authorities covered up her responsibility in the murder). But in 1918 the Revolutionary Tribunal accused her of "pogrom activity." She was sentenced to death and together with another member of the criminal gang in Kiev executed in the Cheka prison.[10] A number of summary trials of other tsarist officials implicated in the Beilis case followed her execution, most prominently, the minister of justice, Ivan Scheglovitov and the police chief Stepan Beletsky, who were both arrested and executed.

Twice the Bolsheviks brought Oskar Vipper to court, the chief prosecutor in the Beilis case. During the first trial, in mid-1918, Vipper was spared the death penalty and given a short prison sentence, and, on account of his "usefulness" to the Bolsheviks, was sent off to work in the city of Kaluga. During the second trial, held by the Revolutionary Tribunal in Moscow in 1919 and used by the regime as a propaganda tool, Vipper was found guilty. The trial opened on September 18 in the building of the Polytechnic Museum.[11] As confirmed by the trial transcripts, chief prosecutor N. V. Krylenko's main concern was to implicate Vipper in the fabrication of the case, and demonstrate that his indictment speech against Beilis held a "pogromist nature."[12] A few hours into the cross-examination, Krylenko pressed Vipper to admit he knew about the Black Hundreds' intention to organize a pogrom after the trial, as well as about the fliers distributed at the boy's funeral promoting anti-Jewish violence.[13] Though Vipper adamantly denied his involvement in the staging of the trial, he confirmed the corruption surrounding the case.

The prosecutor also wanted to prove that Vipper's views expressed in the arraignment speech promoted antisemitism, and that the tsarist prosecutor believed that Jews committed ritual murder. Vipper emphasized that his intention had not been to accuse the Jewish nation as a whole, but "only . . . to show that there is a sect among the Jews." He added that "Jews complained and . . . prompted the accusation against themselves as a group . . . they turned

this case into a sensation. I [am] not guilty."[14] One of the two judges pressed Vipper on the question of belief in ritual murder—an important concern for the Revolutionary Tribunal—and on the question of "Jewish power." Vipper admitted that it was hard to confirm with certainty that Jews practiced the blood ritual, but he did indicate its plausibility. He also voiced his conviction that the "Jewish nation" controlled the press, the banks, and international capital.[15] In extremis, Vipper's defense lawyer attempted to argue that his client's belief in ritual murder did not necessarily imply his antisemitism. The extant literature on the history of fanaticism among religious sects had swayed his views.[16] But his argument was to no avail. The following day, as the trial resumed, Krylenko dismissed it, and the literature, as irrelevant.

In his closing remarks, Vipper rebutted that ritual murder trials had taken place in different modern and "cultured" European countries, including Bohemia and Germany. "So why," he asked, "could the crime not be tried in Russia?"[17] The chief prosecutor's long indictment began by emphasizing Vipper's responsibility in the "tragedy of the Jewish nationality, persecuted and murdered for centuries." The prosecutor added that, "[T]he goal of revolutionary socialism is to create a new world order, in which similar tragedies will not repeat themselves . . . an order that is in opposition to what Vipper believes in." He then proceeded to blame Vipper and his views on ritual murder for the pogroms that took place in cities like Bialystok, Odessa, and Kiev before the Revolution, as well as for the anti-Jewish violence perpetrated by Denikin and Kolchak during the civil war.[18] Finally, Krylenko mocked Vipper by asking him if he felt the same empathy that he experienced while describing the body of the Ukrainian boy allegedly killed by the Jews, for the Jewish children and women murdered during the pogroms. The prosecutor concluded the indictment by passionately calling for the death sentence. "From the vantage point of the Revolution, there is no place [here] for citizens like Vipper. . . . [So] how do we isolate them? I have the solution for the Revolutionary Tribunal: we liquidate them."[19] The prosecutor's words came as a powerful reminder of the Bolsheviks' aversion to antisemitism, especially when associated with tsarist Russia. Even though the death sentence was eventually amended to confinement in a concentration camp, where Vipper died shortly thereafter, the prosecutor's words symbolized the end of what was once culturally and socially acceptable.[20]

During the same year, 1919, in the month of December, the Revolutionary Tribunal put on trial the clergy of the St. Basil Cathedral in Moscow, one of the historic landmarks of Russian Orthodoxy. The trial was in connection with the well-known case of Saint Gabriel, the boy allegedly murdered by

Jews in the Minsk province during the seventeenth century, and canonized by the Orthodox Church in 1820. During the Beilis trial, the prosecution had presented parts of the deceased child's body as evidence of ritual murder. The 1919 criminal case against "antisemitic propaganda carried out in the Moscow St. Basil Cathedral in connection with the relics of the child martyr," resulted in a ban on all rituals associated with the child saint. During the interrogation, one of the members of the Moscow clergy claimed that he was not convinced that Jews did not use human blood for their rituals.[21] As part of the effort to dispel religious superstitions, the Bolsheviks confiscated the box containing the child's relics and relocated it to the Soviet police forces.[22] The ban on rituals and ritual objects regarding an alleged blood libel victim was intended as a prophylactic measure to prevent antisemitism. In 1922, the Moscow publishing house *The Atheist* issued a brochure entitled *Saint Gabriel: A Medieval Beilis Affair* unmasking the child martyr's cult as a dangerous instrument to spread antisemitism.[23] In the 1930s, the Bolsheviks transferred St. Gabriel's relics to the Museum of Atheism in Minsk.[24]

The harsher the Soviet attack was on the church leadership and Orthodoxy's holy sites, the more it validated to some the impression that Jews and Bolsheviks worked together as enemies of Christianity. A 1926 report on antisemitism by the Soviet secret police (OGPU) emphasized that sermons and homilies held under Tikhon, the eleventh patriarch of Moscow, acknowledged that "*Yids*" persecuted the Christian faith, since "all members of the Communist Party are Jewish." The clergy blamed the Jews for the Bolshevik Revolution by referring to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as evidence of the Jewish scheme to rule the world. According to the OGPU report, a number of arrested church leaders had copies of the booklet in their possession. It also added that as late as 1924 a number of Christian sects in the Soviet Union made wide use of the *Protocols*.[25]

The assumption of a Jewish-Bolshevik alliance was further exacerbated by the violent nationalization of church property and by the anti-religious Soviet legislation, which hit hardest the Orthodox Church, one of the bulwarks of tsarist power. In many instances, complaints over the confiscation of church buildings and property underscored the Jewish background of the officials and local authorities involved. The petitioners claimed that "Jews are seizing our churches, . . . [which] are being turned into synagogues."[26] Though it was a distortion, the claim that Jews seized churches had occasionally some modest basis since in fact there were Jews involved in the confiscation of some churches. On the other hand, the assertion that churches were being transformed into synagogues was a total myth, a fabrication that assumed

that the Communists were not just Jews but Jewish believers, for whom Communism represented a superficial veneer for Judaism.

Beilis in Moscow

The Soviet capital became the destination of thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish refugees, some fleeing from the violence of the civil war, many impoverished, tattered, and desperate, some of them too visible because of their traditional garb and language. Never a historic center of Jewish life under the tsar, during the 1920s Moscow was sometimes disparagingly referred to as the "Jewish city." The influx of Jewish migrants fueled the general angst triggered by the Soviet political and economic revolution, the famine that hit the region in 1921–22, and the punitive requisition campaign of church property and religious ornaments of February 1922.

In April of that year, just a few days before Passover, at noon, an elderly Jew hunched over the weight of a sack he carried on his back, cut across Theater Square in downtown Moscow. The man clasped with both hands the top opening of the sack, which was tied around his chest. Some drops of reddish liquid trickled from the sack and drew the attention of passersby. They began to inquire about the sack's contents. Visibly confused, the elderly Jew stumbled, the sack unraveled from his back, and the body of a young boy came falling out. A large crowd suddenly surrounded him as comments including, "Jewish Passover, blood, and murdered child," spread quickly from mouth to mouth. The police swiftly intervened, and apparently Lenin himself was informed. An investigative team was called to ascertain whether the body had suffered any wounds. As the hypothesis of ritual murder grew, so did the crowd's unrest. The doctors eventually confirmed the Jewish identity of the boy (he was circumcised).[27]

When confronted, the elderly Jew protested and asserted that his only income stemmed from burying Jewish children: his job consisted of taking the body from the morgue in exchange for a meager compensation that the child's parents paid to avoid burial taxes. He explained that the body's decay and wounds were caused by the dreadful conditions at the morgue. Within hours the investigative commission confirmed the elderly man's version, questioned all those involved, including the medical personnel, and transferred the material to an ad hoc court.[28] The very next morning, the court issued its sentence: it granted the elderly Jew old-age benefits and conceded that he had been the victim of social injustice and anti-Jewish prejudice. The court also mandated firing members of the medical staff for their apparent misconduct.

This case qualified as a Soviet success story. Thanks to the prompt intervention of the authorities, violence was averted. A Soviet publication celebrated the case acknowledging that, "[I]n approximately 24 hours, the proletarian court liquidated the groundwork for the allegation against Jews that they use Christian blood for ritual purposes."[29] It also noted that the events in 1922 Moscow represented the flip side of the coin to the Beilis case: while all the ingredients were in place—the time of Passover, the child's body, the mysterious wounds, and a long-bearded Jew—no blood libel scandal erupted. Had this very scenario occurred under the tsar, then the elderly Jew would have been arrested, it would have taken months for the truth to come out, and Jews would have been in jeopardy of a pogrom.[30]

The Jews, the State, and the Quest for Citizenship

In the spring of 1926, during Passover, a report about a blood libel accusation appeared in the Soviet Yiddish press. According to the account a homeless woman stood on a street at the outskirts of Minsk, the capital city of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR). She hollered antisemitic remarks, inciting passersby to attack the local Jewish population. Once a large crowd had gathered around her, the woman proceeded to expose the wounds that the Jews had allegedly inflicted upon her as they abducted her, led her into a cellar, and marked her body to draw blood to use for Passover. The woman was quickly taken into custody by the police. At the city hospital, a group of doctors examined her body and ruled out the prospect of blood having been drawn from the wounds. After a second round of questioning, which suggested a possible case of mental illness, the woman admitted to the investigators that the wounds were self-inflicted. Because she had wished to commit suicide, she assumed that in Soviet society spreading such rumors against the Jews would result in her arrest and a death sentence. Suspecting that she had support from a group of "backward elements" who had concocted the false accusation of ritual murder, the police eventually decided to pursue a criminal investigation of the incident. They assumed the involvement of a "counter-revolutionary group" with ties to the tsar.[31]

Although the Yiddish press recorded the Minsk incident in detail, both the Belorussian and Russian-language newspapers remained silent about it. After all, this was only a minor incident. The ranting woman in the marketplace had been quickly arrested and order immediately restored. On the other hand, the public discussion in Yiddish of what appeared as a trifling case of antisemitism reveals the nature of the Jewish response to accusations of ritual

murder in Soviet society in the 1920s and 1930s. The response was usually explicit and uncompromising. In this case, the Yiddish coverage seems exaggerated, almost propagandistic, as if to assure Jews just how seriously Soviet authorities took antisemitic statements, as they investigated the unlikely possibility of a homeless woman being backed by a pro-tsarist group. As equal citizens of the newly established state, Jews (and the Jewish press) openly underscored the shock and outrage at the primitiveness of the barbarian blood accusation—even when the instance of blood libel was so insignificant and absurd like the one that occurred on the streets of Minsk in 1926.

This same emotional outrage over accusations of ritual murder was conveyed some six years earlier by those scholars who partook in the first official Jewish response to the blood libel since the demise of tsarist Russia. The response took shape in the Archives of the Senate, in Petrograd. Conceived as a scholarly endeavor, the venture held fundamental implications for the status and place of Jews in post-revolutionary society. The Commission for Investigating Blood Libel Trial Materials was established in early December 1919.[32] It was convened and funded by the Commissariat of Education, at the time headed by Zachar Grinberg, a young Jewish historian, former Bundist, and member of the Moscow Evsektsiia. As such, the commission was one of the earliest efforts by Jewish communists in power to eradicate the legacy of blood libels. It included eight scholars, four Jewish and four non-Jewish. The Jewish "faction" counted leading intellectuals such as historian Simon Dubnow, publicist and lawyer Genrich Sliozberg, ethnographer Lev Shternberg, and young lawyer and historian Grigoriy Krasnyi-Admony, one of the architects of the commission.[33] The non-Jewish "faction" included distinguished history professor Sergei Platonov—the leading historian of the official St. Petersburg school of Imperial historiography before and after the Revolution,[34] who was appointed head of the commission—archeologist Vasiliy Druzhinin, historian Lev Karsavin, and Ivan Blinov, head archivist of the Senate Archives. An additional number of experts, archivists, and secretaries joined the commission's staff following its establishment.[35]

According to the guiding principles of the scholarly undertaking, the Jewish and non-Jewish factions enjoyed equal authority in the decision-making process; this would guarantee, it was hoped, an unbiased and objective approach to the commission's goal, namely, the selection and publication of previously inaccessible archival documents on ritual murder cases in nineteenth-century Russia, in their entirety. For the first time, primary documents on the blood libel, most of which were housed in the Senate Archives and had not been accessible to Jewish scholars during the tsarist period, would be made available

to the public.[36] Jewish scholars in particular were driven by a strong sense of urgency, by a desire to expose the secrets of the previous regime.[37]

The members of the commission were carefully chosen to ensure an impartial discussion of the sensitive topic of blood libel, the belief in which still enjoyed some respectability and legitimacy among certain segments of Russian society.[38] It seems fair to argue that if many would not accept ritual murder as a common practice among the Jewish people as a whole, many more would easily believe in a "softer" version of the blood ritual.[39] As confirmed by the words of attorney Oscar Vipper—the chief prosecutor in the Beilis case—belief in the existence of a Jewish secret sect that engaged in ritual murder was not uncommon at the time.

The commission on blood libels involved not only making a statement against the reactionary tsarist political system that had failed to condemn antisemitism. From the vantage point of the Jewish scholars and lawyers, the project also entailed confirming, once and for all, the absurdity of the blood allegation. The two hundred pages of protocols of the twenty-five meetings, held on Tuesdays, from 12:00 to 2:00, from December 5, 1919, to December 24, 1920, in the old building of the Senate Archives, chronicle moments of disagreement between the Jewish and non-Jewish members of the commission about the odds of Jews actually carrying out ritual murder. In his opening remarks about the kind of introduction required in the first volume, Krasny-Admony captured the feeling of the other Jewish scholars: "[Our work] goes well beyond the confines of pure scholarship . . ., and carries instead huge legal and moral implications for the Jewish people."[40] So alongside debates on technical questions that ranged from the use of the new Russian orthography; the nature of the commentaries that would introduce the documents; bibliographical and indexing issues; the problem of decoding the handwriting; and whether the first edited volume should cover the Grodno ritual murder trial of 1816 or the better-known Velizh case of 1823–35—besides all these technical and scholarly questions, the laden issue of whether a similar ritual had ever existed among Jews loomed large. In the words of one of the Jewish members of the commission, "if the lie of the ritual murder accusation was for us Jews an axiom, for our Russian co-workers it was a theorem."[41] One of the non-Jewish scholars even sought evidence of a "Jewish sect" that might have committed at least one of the murders reported in the archival documents on blood libel.[42]

The dispute intensified in mid-1920, when Platonov himself encouraged all members to strictly abide by objectivity as a way to avoid predetermined conclusions, including whether ritual murder was ever an accepted practice

among Jews. In an overly diligent attempt to demonstrate his objectivity and neutral position (and perhaps that of the rest of the Jewish "faction"), the young Krasnyi-Admonyi proposed to invite two Russian Hebraists to confirm his translation of the Hebrew words that appeared in the Russian-language documents.[43] This way, he hoped, non-Jewish scholars would refrain from suspecting the Jewish ones of "hiding the real truth" about blood libel.

Perhaps for the first time in modern history, Jewish and non-Jewish historians engaged in a scholarly discussion of documents pertaining to instances of blood libel. While their task was to publish archival material on the ritual murder trials against Jews in tsarist Russia, they occasionally debated the possibility of Jews actually carrying out ritual murder. Some non-Jewish scholars insinuated this likelihood. The Jewish scholars rejected it outright.[44] Ultimately the members of the commission settled on the compromise principle that would underscore their editorial work: "[S]ince historical scholarship doesn't accept the lie of ritual murder, and the essence of our publication should definitely be scientific, then we must recoil from debating the nature [of ritual murder]."[45] Taking place in the context of the new Bolshevik system, which had endorsed the March 1917 emancipation of the Jews, and in the midst of the civil war when the Soviets launched a vocal struggle against antisemitism, these debates represented a microcosm for questions of citizenship. They touched upon issues of acceptance, belonging, and normalcy of the Jewish minority group in the newly established state.[46] The fact that the scholars seemingly spent more time debating the theoretical possibility of ritual murder than editing the documents for publication confirmed these emotions.

The 1816 Grodno ritual murder trial documents that the commission members had so painstakingly retrieved, discussed, and evaluated were never published. After coming under the authority of the Jewish Section of the Commissariat for National Minorities, the commission on blood libels was liquidated in late December 1920. In its place, the Jewish section planned to establish a historical-archival commission, a sort of umbrella Jewish research institution for the study and publication of documents related to the history of Jewish social movements in Russia, the pogroms of the civil war, and ritual murder accusations (this historical-archival commission collected documents related to the trials against Russian authorities involved in the Beilis case, including the transcripts of Vipper's trial).[47] The fact that the first (and last) volume produced by the ritual murder commission was never published derived most likely from technical difficulties, including the liquidation of the

Commissariat for National Minorities and the departure from Soviet territories of a number of scholars involved in the commission.[48]

Ritual Murder in Soviet Propaganda

The Soviets' official response to the blood allegation fluctuated between public condemnation and utter disregard. Their restraint in addressing the question stemmed from the nature of the accusation itself, which they viewed as the by-product of religious fanaticism embedded in the dark superstitions of the Middle Ages. As one Soviet publication stated, "The ritual murder ghost from the Middle Ages has a forlorn life in the Soviet Union."[49] The Soviets accepted, or at least understood, a Marxist justification of socioeconomic expressions of antisemitism (whereby "new Soviet antisemites" could accuse Jews of being bourgeois, NEPmen, or businessmen who engaged in private trade, exploiters of the working class, clericalists, or nationalists). But they could not justify accusations of Jews killing Christians for ritual purposes in an atheistic state that had supposedly uprooted all religious fanaticism.

During the 1920s, especially, the Soviets promoted educational methods to debunk antisemitism, including lectures and publications. A number of these openly discussed the blood libel. They pinpointed its origin in the Catholic Church's religious teachings, chronicled its endurance in different reactionary political systems, in particular in Imperial Russia, where it enjoyed the patronage of the tsar and the conservative press, and acknowledged its decline in communist society. Most public discussions cast ritual murder as a thing of the past.[50] To mark the ten-year anniversary of the Beilis Affair, one of Beilis's former lawyers gave talks about the blood libel case in thirty-five cities across the Soviet Union, including one in the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow.[51] Even the more sophisticated analysis of the historic roots and development of the blood allegation, relegated ritual murder to the pre-revolutionary years and linked it to the pogroms.[52]

In one rare instance, in 1931, *Bezbozhnik u stanka* (The Godless at the Workplace), the monthly publication of the League of Militant Atheists—the most powerful public voice in the struggle to delegitimize religion—assessed the question of blood libel somewhat differently. After reminding readers of the complete absurdity of the accusation, confirmed by the fact that "the consumption of blood is categorically forbidden in Judaism," the author acknowledged the existence of the blood allegation in contemporary Soviet society. While making the preposterous statement that rabbis and bourgeois Jews were spared from the blood libel accusation, which

they often exploited to fulfill their class-driven purposes to control the Jewish working masses, the author claimed that "accusations against Jews for using Christian blood . . . occupy a central role in the recent upsurge in antisemitism."[53] One year later, in 1932, the State Anti-Religious Publishing House in Moscow felt that the matter was pressing enough to require the publication of a comprehensive study on ritual murder; this was entitled *The Blood Libel and the Christian Church*.[54]

The evil influence of reactionary religious leaders generated the only possible link between antisemitic outbreaks and the blood libel. Orthodox priests and believers were accused of building new churches in the vicinity of Soviet factories and encouraging the Soviet regime's political enemies, such as former barons and counts, to infiltrate local Party institutions and perpetuate the legacy of the Black Hundreds.[55] In other words, propaganda against the blood libel was used by the Soviets not only to combat interethnic strife but as a device to persecute the Russian-Orthodox church as well. The Church was blamed for spreading this hatred. In fact, only a very imprudent and naïve priest would give a sermon against the Jews in a Soviet church in 1922–23. According to one source, this might have happened as late as 1929, when a Soviet propagandist in a Moscow factory club blamed an Orthodox priest for spreading the false accusation that "Jews drink Christian blood."[56] However, in the interwar period ritual murder accusations involving police investigations, the intervention of local and central authorities, and trials were actually instigated by workers, peasants, or Soviet citizens occupying prominent positions in society, often Communist Party members, and not by churchmen.

Ritual Murder in Soviet Cities

In his Marxist reading of antisemitism *Jews and Antisemitism in the USSR*, issued in 1929, economist Yuri Larin mentioned only two cases of blood libel in the Soviet Union, which occurred in Central Asia and in the Caucasus, in the second half of the 1920s. A prolific writer and activist against antisemitism, Larin differentiated between a more "cultured and enlightened" form of anti-Jewish prejudice, which could be observed in Moscow and Leningrad, and which, he claimed, "never includes the accusation of ritual murder," and a more primitive and backward expression of antisemitism which comprised the ritual murder allegation.[57] The latter could emerge exclusively in "primitive and pre-industrial" regions such as Dagestan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan, where denunciations against Jews for using the blood of

Christian (and Muslim) children to prepare matzah for Passover escalated into anti-Jewish violence. In Makhachkala, the capital city of Dagestan, in the North Caucasus, the disappearance of two Muslim boys during the Passover of 1926 triggered a series of pogroms in the city and nearby towns. The violence subsided only once the boys were found, alive. As the mob quieted down, it became clear that several Jews had been killed.[58] Soviet authorities in Moscow dispatched an investigative commission to Dagestan. They gathered information about the relations between Jews and non-Jews, and recorded several instances of antisemitism that took place with impunity. Moscow denounced the local authorities, blaming them for the unsatisfactory level of Sovietization in the region, and for the complete absence of a campaign to uproot antisemitism.[59]

A second instance of blood libel occurred in 1929 in the same region of Dagestan, in the town of Serebriakovo. The recovery of the body of a Christian boy from the river promptly sparked blood libel rumors. Local residents accused the recently settled Jews of killing the boy for ritual purposes. Though the incident took place on the eve of Yom Kippur (and was thus unrelated to Passover and matzah), it was still linked to the consumption of bread products by Jews. When the new Jewish settlers reached the town's state mill to grind their grain, local residents surrounded them and threatened to kill them, to take revenge for the murdered child. The chairman of the town's soviet refused to interfere and maintain law and order, thus reinforcing the allegations against the Jews. Eventually the local police, together with activists from the Komsomol, or the Communist Youth League, intervened and forced the crowd to disperse. The ensuing criminal investigation exposed the real identity of the murderer, who was arrested together with the local residents who "nearly perpetrated a pogrom," and the chairman of the town's soviet for failing to act.[60]

When a wave of ritual murder accusations struck Uzbekistan in 1929, a Soviet publicist held the tsarist government directly accountable for having spread the blood legend at the time of the Beilis case.[61] To be sure, the news about the alleged ritual murder in Kiev had reached Central Asia and the Caucasus:[62] in 1911, as an aftershock of the Beilis Affair, the Jews in the city of Tarki, in Dagestan, were accused of abducting a Muslim girl for ritual purposes. Similar accusations sprung up in the cities of Sachkhere and Surami, in Georgia.[63] When almost twenty years later the police found a young boy hidden in the basement of a house in Bukhara, in Soviet Uzbekistan, rumors spread quickly through the marketplace: the Jews kidnapped the child and "shaved his hair to better drain the blood with their special machines."[64] The

accusation spread, reaching the Uzbek capital of Samarkand, where "some anti-Soviet elements made public statements" against Jews and their involvement in ritual murder. According to one source, several Jews were arrested. The allegation of ritual murder then spread to Chradzhou, in Turkmenistan, where the alleged victim had morphed into a Turkmen boy, "whose wounded body was uncovered in a secret chamber."[65]

Yuri Larin most certainly circumscribed his discussion of blood libel to these events in Central Asia and the Caucasus because some of them fit the tsarist model, which included an eruption of violence in conjunction with the accusation. For example, the fact that a Jewish girl who attempted to dispute a ritual murder accusation in Bukhara, in September 1928, was killed in the ensuing riot qualified as blood libel.[66] On the other hand, Larin resisted recording those instances in the more "cultured" European regions of the Soviet lands, in which the blood accusation almost spiraled into a pogrom, but did not quite yet. In a similar dynamic, the Soviets strove to confine all public discussion of the blood libel to the chronological boundaries of prerevolutionary Russia and to the geographic context of 1930s fascist Europe.

Based on thorough archival research, Alexander Tager's major study of the Beilis Affair, *Tsarist Russia and the Beilis Affair*, was first issued in Moscow in 1932, and a second edition appeared in 1933.[67] Not unlike Lenin a few years earlier, Tager described the blood libel as the most evil embodiment of tsarist antisemitism and the climax of Nicholas II's reactionary politics. The Beilis Affair, stated Tager in his introduction, marked by an exceptional clerical element, resulted in the most vicious political trial in Russian history.[68] As the spin-off of state antisemitism, continued Tager, something comparable was no longer possible under the Soviets. It was, however, likely in countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary, and, of course, Hitler's Germany, which revived the blood libel and issued publications about the Jews' consumption of Christian blood.[69]

But in fact, contrary to the notions boldly advanced by Larin and Tager, blood accusations did occur after the revolution on Soviet territory, in places beyond Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Why Did You Drink the Little Boy's Blood? Don't You Remember the Beilis Case?

On July 29, 1926, in the city of Belyov, in the Russian province of Tula, the three-year-old son of a Communist Party member went missing near the locomotive shed of the local train station. The following day the boy's corpse

was found in the building's bathroom.[70] The medical experts who intervened at once as part of the police investigation confirmed the absence of any inflicted wounds or cuts on the boy's body. Still the boy's father accused a group of Jewish families, who were living on the second floor of the building where the corpse was found, of having killed the boy in order to remove the blood they needed for ritual purposes, in particular for matzah. The accusation, and the ensuing rumors, spread quickly. Some city residents contemplated attacking the Jews to avenge the murdered boy; some, including a number of Communist Party members, carried out anti-Jewish propaganda. The escalating tensions almost degenerated into a pogrom. One Communist Party member disparagingly asked his Jewish neighbor, "Why did you drink the little boy's blood? Don't you remember the Beilis case?" Appealing to historical memory, he recalled the Beilis precedent and implied the liability in ritual murder of an imagined Jewish collective: this crime got them in trouble then and would get them in trouble again. The child's father even attempted to persuade a peasant from a nearby village to testify that he had seen how the Jews took the child's body to the bathroom after they killed him. The peasant initially agreed to be part of the scheme, but eventually refused to testify against the Jews. He stated, "I don't want to be a witness because for these things one can end up in prison [in the Soviet system]."[71] The allegation that Jews used Christian blood for ritual purposes became a source of embarrassment for the Soviets, particularly when it was uttered by a Communist Party member or a state official.[72]

The GPU secret police reports on the Tula instance emphasized the Party affiliation of those involved, but it did not include any record about the Jewish response to the accusations.[73] The secret police deemed this information irrelevant to combat antisemitism. Other sources, however (in particular the press—mostly, but not exclusively, in Yiddish), shed light on the Soviet Jewish story, confirming the Jews' assertiveness to defy local authorities and demand that central authorities take action and follow the official Party line on antisemitism. In a number of reports on ritual murder accusation in the interwar period, Jews denounced the authorities' ineptness at bringing to justice those responsible for spreading the lie, often notable figures in the local community, Party institutions, and local Soviet governance. One such case occurred in 1926, on the eve of Passover, in the city of Kaniev (Kaniv), in the Cherkassy province. It resulted in the intervention of the highest governmental authorities in the Ukrainian Republic.

In March 1926, a twenty-year-old Ukrainian woman disappeared from her parents' home in Kaniev, a small city in central Ukraine. After awaiting

her return in vain all night, and encouraged by his neighbors' claims that Jews use Christian blood for their Passover matzah, the young woman's father turned to the district police department. Here, he contended that she must have been murdered by Ben-Tsion Liberman, the manager of the local cooperative. As he told the chief of police, his daughter bought milk every day from Liberman, and since "it was the eve of Passover," he must have used her blood to bake matzah. Assuming that the ritual murder had indeed taken place, the chief of police, together with the whole police department, thoroughly searched Liberman's home for the body, digging out and razing the kitchen floor.[74] Possibly encouraged by the police authorities' behavior a group of Ukrainian city residents began to call upon the rest of the population to assault the Jews: if Liberman did not kill the young woman (her body was not discovered in his home), then it must have been the deed of some other local Jew. As in other instances of ritual murder accusation, the profession and socioeconomic background of both accuser and accused mattered, as class exacerbated ethnic strife and could serve as a catalyst for the allegation. Fearing an imminent pogrom, the Jewish population hid in the local synagogue and tried to send a delegation to the capital of Ukraine, Kharkov, soliciting the Party's Central Committee for protection. The mob eventually quieted down on its own as the young woman was finally located in a nearby hospital, where she had been planning to have a secret abortion, without the knowledge of her parents.[75]

The power struggle between local authorities on the one hand and Jews claiming their rights as Soviet citizens on the other plays out noticeably in this case. The chief of police attempted to cover up his role in the incident, pressuring the Jewish population into signing a statement in his defense, but Jewish Red Army officers and soldiers (possibly informed by family members in the city) turned to the local press and higher authorities, calling for justice. From their position of prominence, respectability, and ideological reliability in Soviet society, the Red Army officers and soldiers demanded that the chief of police, alongside all those who partook in the incident, be taken to trial. Their intervention in the matter could be viewed by central authorities primarily as an effort to speak out against an obvious violation of Soviet principles—which included the struggle against antisemitism—and not exclusively as a manifestation of allegiance to the Jewish national group and defense of its members' status as citizens with equal rights. The Jewish Red Army officers' and soldiers' petition reached the Regional Party Organization, which sent a commission to Kaniev to investigate the ritual murder accusation, including representatives from the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee and the

Prosecutor's Office of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (the most powerful institutions in the Republic). The investigative commission eventually rebuked the local authorities for concealing the incident from central authorities, dismissed the chief of police from his position, and organized a trial against him.[76]

In his investigation, the envoy from the prosecutor's office noted that the Kaniev incident was not the only case of alleged ritual murder that occurred in the region. Reporting back to Kharkov, he referred to a similar case that took place during the same month of April, fifty kilometers from Kaniev, in the city of Cherkassy. Here, the discovery of the body of a murdered woman triggered the accusation against local Jews of drawing the victim's blood for matzah. In his report, the prosecutor's envoy grouped both cases under the same rubric of "the Cherkassy Beilisade."[77]

A similar turn of events occurred a few years later in the city of Poltava, in central Ukraine. Here, in 1929, a member of the local city soviet accused his neighbor openly, in court, of planning to murder his daughter and use her blood to bake Passover matzah.[78] The correspondent of the central Yiddish daily in Ukraine expressed his criticism of Soviet authorities. He complained that the judge failed to inflict a suitable punishment on the city soviet member for his blood libel remarks, and that the accusation of ritual murder was not even mentioned in the court's final verdict. The journalist protested publicly against the mild sentence of two months of forced labor, objecting that the "antisemite" had not been dismissed from his position but "continued to stroll freely through the city spreading rumors about Jews using Christian blood to bake matzah."[79] Although the local Ukrainian newspaper, *The Poltava Worker*, did not provide any context or details about the incident, it did reveal and condemn the behavior of a group of students from the local workers' university who shielded the two Soviet officials implicated in the blood libel accusation, the "Black Hundred" judge, and the city soviet member.[80] Finally, the author of the Yiddish article called for a speedy public trial against the city soviet member and his benefactor, the Communist judge. "This should be done now, during Passover," he wrote, "to show the workers of the Soviet Union that here antisemites, as well as those who exploit their position of power and authority to support them, are severely prosecuted."[81] The implication of this concluding statement was that such accusations were common at the time of Passover and that Soviet authorities should publicly condemn and reprimand. From Moscow, *Pravda* took up the Poltava matter and lashed out at the local courts for not responding aptly to complaints of antisemitism.[82]

Through Soviet Eyes

Two observations seem essential to fully grasp the dynamics of Jewish responses to the blood allegation. First, like any other aspect of the Soviet Jewish experience, even antisemitism should be viewed also through the lenses of regional factors and specificities rather than in an all-Union context. The response of Jews (and perhaps of local authorities as well) to blood libel accusations seems to have been more assertive and public in Jewish demographic centers of the former Pale of Settlement. The demographic reality of places where Jews constituted a significant percentage of the population, and where many occupied positions of authority, could make them feel more at ease and empowered when confronted with antisemitism. But numbers did not always play a key role. To be sure, with only 20 percent of the population Jewish, neither Kaniev nor Poltava were great Jewish demographic centers. In fact, there might have been a direct link between access to power and the open discussion of blood libel instances. Arguably, only ritual murder accusations made within the context of places where Jews had access to people or positions of some prominence in Soviet society were reported to local, regional, or central authorities and eventually made it to the press. Relying on the government's notional condemnation of antisemitism, Jewish members of the Komsomol or the local militia would therefore confront the authorities who failed to act and set off the investigation and ensuing arrest of those responsible for spreading the allegations. The case of Tula, for example, remained confined to secret police reports not so much because Jews made up an insignificant percentage of the population but most likely because of their marginality in the local and regional power networks.

The second observation relates to the information about blood libels in neighboring Poland, which appeared frequently in the Soviet press. When comparing ritual murder cases in Soviet Russia (which officially condemned antisemitism) to those in Poland (which tolerated and, in the 1930s especially, increasingly engaged in antisemitism), it generally seems that in both countries the authorities' first step in the criminal investigation was based on the presumption that Jews might indeed have carried out the ritual murder.[83] In the Soviet case, however, once the accusation was cast off, often with the intervention of central authorities, those guilty were put on trial. Not in Poland. In 1931, for example, the Yiddish newspaper *Lublin Daily* reported the case of a teacher in a Polish state school in Kusmenek (Kosminek), outside Lublin, who told the class that "Jews use blood for ritual purposes."[84] When a Jewish student challenged the statement, the teacher insisted and supported

his claim by referring to the Beilis case, disregarding the Jewish student's reminder of the court's acquittal of Beilis. The Polish state school teacher most likely knew that during the trial the jury supported the prosecution's claim regarding the blood libel. The Yiddish daily concluded its report rather mildly, calling upon "educational authorities to prevent antisemitism in Polish state schools."[85]

In a very similar instance that occurred in Moscow three years earlier, at the time of Passover, the Russian teacher Dunaievtsi shared with the students his belief that Jews used blood for Passover rituals (he also mentioned the Beilis Affair). Heartened by his teacher's remarks, a student revealed his personal experience, claiming to have seen a matzah factory that made use of Christian blood. Unlike the Polish case, where no legal action was taken, the school principal (who might or might not have been Jewish) filed a complaint against the teacher to the Soviet secret police. Dunaievtsi was arrested at once and put on trial.[86]

When reading in the Yiddish, and occasionally Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian press about blood libel reports in Poland and in the USSR, Soviet Jews could not avoid taking notice of the different reactions to the false accusation on the part of the Polish legal system on the one hand and the Soviet legal system on the other. Perhaps some of them might have even experienced a sense of empowerment and self-confidence knowing that, unlike other countries in Europe at the time, the Soviet Union considered the claim of Jewish ritual murder a crime.[87]

At the same time, however, in the Soviet Union the Jewish response to antisemitism had to be self-monitored and restrained, perhaps more so, ironically, than in the context of a political system that did not actively condemn antisemitism—as in Poland, for example. Because Soviet officials commonly situated the campaign against antisemitism within their broader struggle against chauvinism and "bourgeois nationalism," protesting too frequently (and too loudly) against manifestations of antisemitism could easily backfire and lead the authorities to accuse the accuser—or the Jewish victim of slander—of harboring Jewish "bourgeois nationalism."[88]

Hersh Smoliar, a member of the Central Bureau of the Ukrainian SSR's Evsektsiia (the most prominent official Jewish body until 1930), captured in his memoirs this self-restraint in condemning antisemitism. He contended that local Evsektsiia officials were extremely reticent about raising issues of antisemitism in reports to their superiors.[89] Their reaction was careful, as they tried to read the message from Moscow navigating between what was possible and what was inadmissible. In 1922, for example, in the city of Saransk, local

authorities called to account a Jewish man for the alleged ritual murder of a Christian boy. When the Evsektsiia's central bureau intervened and asked the central authorities to intercede, it did not even mention the word "antisemitism"; rather, it limited the grievance to the Cheka employee's lack of political education.[90] One writer candidly admitted that in 1929 the surge in antisemitism was the direct consequence of the intensified public discussion of anti-Jewish acts. In other words, the more the Party, the press, and society in general openly discussed and confronted antisemitism, the more this discussion created backlash against Jews.[91]

Ironically, it might have been less perilous for Jews in positions of power in the general Soviet administration or Party organizations to react forcefully and effectively to antisemitism, than it was for Jews who publicly identified with "Jewish work." To go back to the 1926 "Kaniev-Beilis Affair," in his correspondence with the prosecutor's office in the Ukrainian capital, the GPU official complained that the local and regional executive committee and Party committee in the Cherkassy region had been swayed by the Evsektsiia to keep quiet about the case. Apparently, Evsektsiia members had pressured local authorities to refrain from protesting ritual murder. If the GPU official simply dismissed them as "illiterate people," the Evsektsiia's response might have resulted from the real synergy existing in Soviet society between combating antisemitism and the danger of being branded a Jewish nationalist.[92] Perhaps anticipating some of the tendencies that would emerge forcefully in the late 1930s, Evsektsiia activists (most of whom were former members of Jewish nationalist parties) anxiously eluded possible accusations of Jewish nationalism and Zionism by refraining from speaking up against antisemitism. When the 1926 Special Commission on ethnic relations in Ukraine described the pre-revolutionary legacy of antisemitism as a "relic of racial hatred taught at the time of the tsar," it also referred to the "Kaniev-Beilis Affair." The report deemed the case dangerous primarily because it "strengthened the Zionist movement."[93]

On Memory and Tactics

Written and oral references to the Beilis case echoed through many instances of blood libel in the Soviet Union. Despite the defendant's acquittal, the tsarist legal system had de facto put a stamp of approval on one of the oldest antisemitic lies in history. Under the Soviets, the mention of the Beilis case still validated ritual murder accusations against Jews, as its memory resonated from Kaniev to Bukhara. For the Bolshevik state, the Beilis Affair remained

the symbol of a corrupt system that unjustly took to trial a Jewish man wrongly accused of a "counter-revolutionary" libel. It also stood as an admonishment as to how the political and legal system of the Soviet state should not operate: in the Soviet context, the accused were never taken to court, while the accusers became the new defendants.

The memory of the Beilis Affair lingered throughout the interwar and postwar periods. It occasionally surfaced in the work of Soviet writers and artists but was demarcated by the state's increasing ambivalence toward the public discussion of antisemitism. During and following World War II in particular, Soviet central authorities gradually desisted from their commitment to struggle against antisemitism. The Beilis Affair was the subject of the 1940 play *The Empire's Prestige* by Lev Sheinin, a popular Soviet writer who had also worked for the USSR State Prosecutor's Office during the show trials of 1936–38. In May 1940, the Soviet Committee on Cinema Affairs invited the great Soviet film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein to put together the film adaptation of the play. In the adaptation, Eisenstein's intention was not only to chronicle the facts but most importantly to convey the social and public resonance of the Beilis case. Not surprisingly, in November 1941, in the midst of the war against Germany, the project became "uninteresting." In lieu of the Beilis Affair, Andrei Zhdanov, Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, encouraged Eisenstein to explore different themes, including the life of Ivan the Terrible.[94] The production of the film on the "shameful" Beilis case was eventually deemed inappropriate; and Sheinin's play was not performed in a single theater.[95] The work of Soviet Yiddish writer Avraham Kahan, who turned to the Beilis case for inspiration for his novel entitled *Crime and Consciousness*, experienced the same fate.[96] Originally written in Yiddish, the novel appeared only following the author's death, in 1965, in serialized form in the Soviet Yiddish literary journal *Sovetish Heymland* (Soviet Homeland).[97]

The Jewish response to the ritual murder accusation changed over time. It reflected the shifting status of the Jews during the 1930s and 1940s. This in turn, signaled political changes in the Soviet system. In general, during the years of the intense state-sponsored campaign against antisemitism, roughly from 1925 to 1931, when most of the propaganda efforts were carried out and the literature appeared, information about blood libel cases surfaced publicly, and with transparency, mostly in Yiddish. At the same time, these cases received "silent coverage" in Russian, and were included in the secret correspondence of police authorities. Although many allegations of ritual murder were followed by criminal investigations of varying intensity and duration

(most of them dated 1926, 1928, 1929, when the campaign against antisemitism was in full swing), many never went beyond rumor mongering. And many others probably went unnoticed because the authorities dismissed them or Jews feared to report them.

Before the Revolution, the Jewish community and Jewish institutions intervened to confront ritual murder allegations and attempt to avert the danger of anti-Jewish violence.[98] Under the Soviets, the Evsektsiia played this role, albeit with inconsistency. The Jewish press became a much more efficient player in reporting antisemitism. Individual Jews turned to the press to complain about instances of antisemitism; the local Yiddish press publicly condemned, and passed along the baton to alert the Russian central organs. Perhaps even encouraged by the open discussion of overriding antisemitism in Germany and Poland in the 1930s, the Yiddish press came to serve as a Soviet Jewish outlet for grievances against instances of antisemitism, including ritual murder—at times, very successfully.

3 THE POGROMS AS SOVIET (JEWISH) SITES OF MEMORY

In mid-1926, in the Obodov district of the Vinnitsa (Vinnytsia) region, in west-central Ukraine, the Soviet secret police recorded complaints about the way in which local communist organizations dealt with young Jews. While Communist Party and Komsomol cells ignored applications by Jewish workers for months on end, they tended to accept immediately into their ranks those peasants who in May 1919 had participated in the bloody pogrom that destroyed the nearby shtetl.[1] Located near the town of Trostianets, the shtetl of Obodivko was completely erased from the map of Ukraine on May 10, 1919, when three hundred Jews were murdered. The local peasants then destroyed Jewish houses in order to use the wood for heating during the upcoming winter months. But the memory of the shtetl's obliteration lingered and reemerged seven years later in the disputes about Party-cell membership.

While the pogroms of the civil war prompted the Soviet-Jewish alliance, shaped the contours, and dictated the rules for the relationship between Jews and the Bolshevik state, the memory of the violence also influenced ethnic relations for decades. Those victims, perpetrators, and bystanders who continued to live in the same town, shtetl, or region preserved the memory of anti-Jewish violence and at times referred to it to confront the adversities of Soviet life. This dynamic was particularly acute in those towns and cities that witnessed intense violence during the pogroms.

In August 1928, a GPU investigative commission was set up in Kharkov, the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, to probe a case of antisemitism that occurred in the town of Trostianets, in the Vinnitsa region of Podolia.[2] At the beginning of the summer, tensions had erupted between Jewish and Ukrainian workers and factory managers at the local wine factory. First, the factory's Party-cell secretary, Nikita Fishenko, fired the factory

Legacy of Blood. Elissa Bemporad, Oxford University Press (2019). © Oxford University Press.
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committee's secretary—one Geltser, of Jewish nationality—with the excuse of "rationalizing" production. In his place, he hired a Russian. In subsequent days and weeks, other Jewish employees were fired and non-Jews were hired in their place. The hostility between Jewish and non-Jewish employees became all the more acrimonious during the factory meeting of July 8, 1928, when the participants broke into two factions, along ethnic lines, and engaged in mutual insults calling each other "bandits, speculators, troublemakers!" And then, as a reminder to their non-Jewish co-workers that hostility and brutality against Jews would no longer be tolerated, someone barked, "Where do you think you are? This is not 1919!"[3]

Almost ten years had passed since the pogrom of May 1919, which had struck the Jewish population of Trostianets. But its memory was intensely alive and most likely intersected with the exceptional socioeconomic conditions and the worrisome unemployment rates that affected Soviet society—small towns and shtetls in particular—at the end of the NEP (new economic policy) period and on the eve of the first Five-Year plan. According to different sources, between 350 and 650 Jews were killed during the pogrom.[4] While ethnic relations in the shtetl had become strained in early March 1919, under Petliura's forces they further deteriorated following the Soviet occupation of the town and the return of the Ukrainian army in May of that year. Even though the Revolutionary Committee (Revkom) and other temporary Soviet organs set up in the territory under Bolshevik control had been staffed up mostly by local Ukrainians, rumors of a *zhidovskoe tsarstvo*, or a Jewish kingdom, had seized the shtetl after the Red Army's departure.[5] The resentment toward an alleged pro-communist Jewish power loomed large. Ukrainian insurgents, together with local peasants and residents of surrounding villages armed with shovels, axes, and pitchforks, gushed through the shtetl, looting Jewish homes and businesses and arresting mostly Jewish men (and raping Jewish women).[6] Taken captive, Jewish men and boys were killed in the same building in which the Bolsheviks had set up their headquarters. Their bodies were then transferred to a huge mass grave, which had been prepared the day before the murder, at the site of the so-called pool where soiled water from the local slaughterhouse and the sugar factory was drained.[7] The violence subsided only with the return of the Soviets.

The general expectation that those who carried out the violence would be punished was never fully met. In fact, Soviet authorities arrested and shot only three perpetrators in the Trostianets pogrom; the majority, realizing that their actions would go unpunished, soon resumed strolling through the town's streets, even wearing the clothing that they had plundered from the

victims. According to one witness, the fear of further outbreaks of violence led many Jews to leave the town for Odessa or Kiev, so that only 25 percent of the surviving Jewish population remained in Trostianets.[8] Based on the data collected by the Kiev branch of the Jewish Committee to Aid the Victims of the Pogroms, or Evobshchestkom,[9] established as a Soviet Jewish aid organization in 1920 to provide welfare to pogrom victims, before the pogrom approximately 4,000 Jews and 8,000 non-Jews lived in Trostianets. Following the pogrom, in January 1922, 1,400 Jews remained in the town, alongside 8,000 non-Jews.[10] The violence, therefore, not only reduced the size of the Jewish population considerably but also turned it into a weaker minority group with little influence on local politics.

Punishing those implicated in the pogroms constituted an immense task for the newly established political system. To be sure, justice was never systematically carried out in every city and town shaken by the civil war, primarily because it depended on the local authorities' commitment to fight antisemitism. The absence of justice encouraged in turn the preservation of a culture of violence. In particular, when in conjunction with an existing socioeconomic crisis, such as the one that took hold of Soviet society in 1928, at the end of the NEP era, the memory of violence exacerbated ethnic tensions.

Neglecting to bring the perpetrators to justice carried long-term consequences. The reality of pogromists running free was confusing for victims, onlookers, and perpetrators themselves, and it clashed with the Soviet official rhetoric on antisemitism. It gave the impression that some forms of antisemitism would be tolerated, especially in certain local contexts still tinged with the memory of violence. But punishing perpetrators of antisemitic violence was ultimately not a top priority. The regime aimed above all to develop an obedient and loyal "citizenry." Bringing up old crimes would only inflame the emotions of the new citizens, and weaken the chance of building trust and support for the Soviet system.

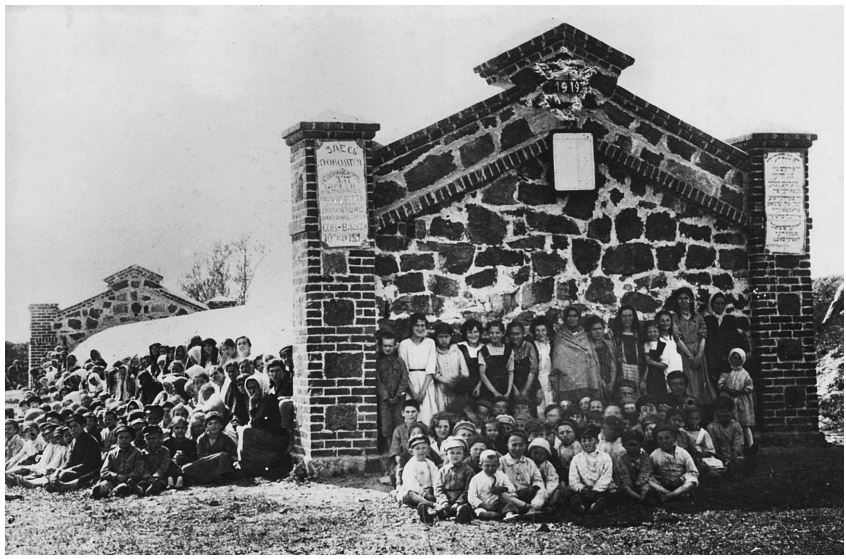
The Case of Trostianets

The violence of the civil war played out ten years later in the escalating ethnic tensions in the Trostianets wine factory. Here, the Party-cell secretary Fishenko, who had joined the Communist Party in 1926 and had been an active participant in the pogrom that killed hundreds of Jews in 1919, disclosed to the head of the local fire brigade his intention to "liquidate the entire Jewish population [of the town], killing everyone, from the youngest to the oldest."[11] He had not been put on trial, nor had he undergone any punishment

for the crimes he had committed in 1919. The evidence assembled during the GPU investigation confirmed that several former pogromists were employed at the time in the local and regional Soviet apparatus. These included the head of the statistics bureau of the Regional Executive Committee, a staff member of the local People's Court, the supervisor of the Trostianets electric power station, the chairman of the town's agricultural cooperative, the representative of the Trostianets insurance office, several wine factory workers, peasants, and a teacher, originally from Trostianets, but who resided at the time in the Belaia Tserkov (Bila Tserkva) region.[12]

What mostly alarmed the GPU officials who conducted the investigation was the high concentration of former pogromists—who as such were also deemed anti-Soviet elements—in the local Party apparatus: ten of them were either Communist Party members or candidates to the Party membership. The knowledge about the active participation during the civil war pogroms of those who later became local officials or Party functionaries remained an open secret among Trostianets residents, embedded in local lore. The GPU report concluded by acknowledging that "Everyone knows who they are and what they represent based on their past actions," adding, "this elicits mistrust for Soviet authorities."[13] As a way to further prevent outbreaks of ethnic strife between Jews and Ukrainians, the Kharkov authorities questioned the witnesses in secret.

The presence of a massive monument, which had been erected after the Soviets reoccupied the town, further nurtured the encumbered memory of violence of the 1919 events. The memorial stood on the site of the mass grave where hundreds of Jews were buried, about one kilometer from the town's center. The 1922 Jewish Committee report described the immense monument "standing in the empty space as a concrete cry . . . towards which orphans and widows often stream."[14] For those who, opted to remain following the pogroms and did not move to larger urban centers, the memory of violence was so vivid and so embedded in everyday life that it came to measure time: throughout the interwar period, Jews referred to the great pogrom as "the disaster"; all events were seen through the lens of the pogrom, whether they affected the personal life of the individual or the life of the country; specific events were remembered and discussed based on whether they had occurred "before the disaster" or "after the disaster." Insofar as local Jews—widows, orphans, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters—visited the mass grave regularly, the memory of the pogrom remained an integral component of the town's local history, shaping Jewish collective identity and consciousness.[15] As a marker of Jewish identity, the memory of the pogrom became even more important than before the Revolution.



Children gather in front of the memorial to the 1919 pogrom in Trostianets, Ukraine. The inscription in Russian and in Yiddish reads: "Here rest 337 Jews of Trostianets brutally murdered on May 9–10, 1919, by the enemies of the Soviet state." The memorial was established shortly after the massacre, following the return of Soviet power to the town. Built of red and gray stone, the immense memorial, which covers the mass grave at the site of the victims' murder, is still standing today. It measures more than a block in length. *Courtesy of Vadim Altskan*

Built of red and gray stones, the memorial measured more than one block in length. Its massiveness and almost intimidating grandeur loomed visibly from the surrounding shtetls and villages. While paying homage to friends and family members who had been killed during the pogrom, a *Forward* correspondent who traveled from New York to the Soviet Union in 1932 noted that the memorial "reminds everyone, both locals and visitors, of the story of the 'disaster.'"[16] To be sure, this Jewish site of memory was problematic for many, particularly for those non-Jewish residents who were forced to remember and confront their own responsibility (or that of their parents) as perpetrators or onlookers of the massacre. The monument's existence could trigger an emotional response of anger or shame, especially among younger Ukrainians, and become the target of hostility and periodic violence. Local peasants or residents of nearby villages would occasionally gather by the memorial with axes and metal tubes, dislodge the bricks, and attempt to destroy it, in a desperate effort to erase the memory of neighbors killing neighbors. "They would want to forget about it."[17] But the memorial, referred to as the "wailing wall," is still standing today and is listed as an official historical monument in the Vinnitsa region.[18]

Although the pogrom memorial in Trostianets stood out for its size, it was by no means unique. Pogrom memorials were set up in many towns and cities across the Soviet Union to commemorate pogrom victims in the aftermath of the violence.[19] The inscription on the Trostianets memorial, which appeared both in Russian and in Yiddish, read as follows: "Here rest 337 Jews of Trostianets brutally murdered on May 9–10, 1919, by the enemies of the Soviet state."[20] The message conveyed to anyone who passed by the memorial, Jews and non-Jews alike, was unambiguous: the Soviet state commemorated, remembered, and guarded Jews against anti-Jewish violence.

The Trials

Over the course of the civil war, Jews turned to the Revolutionary Committee (Revkom), the temporary Soviet administration in the territories under the Red Army, to protest the violence. In one petition, dated 1921, fifty-five signatories from Klevan, a town in the Rovno (Rivne) province of western Ukraine, pleaded with the Revkom "for help in saving the lives and property . . . in investigating the events of the pogrom, in establishing the amount of losses, . . . and in taking precautions so that this will not happen again."[21] The petition went unheeded. A second and more detailed memorandum followed. Here, the Klevan Jewish community complained about the ongoing violence, as well as about the Revkom's indifference to the events and the absence of an investigation. The memorandum also added that in some instances Red Army soldiers had engaged in the looting, and even instigated and participated in the pogrom.[22] The authorities probably ignored the complaint because of its outright critique of the behavior of Red Army soldiers, who were supposed to refrain from anti-Jewish brutality and prevent future outbreaks.

Any public discussion of the events had to comply with the Soviet understanding of the conflict: in this paradigm Soviet forces ought to abide by Lenin's view of antisemitism at all times and take sides with the struggle against the pogroms as inherently counter-revolutionary. It was hard to encapsulate within fixed ideological parameters the reality of ongoing shifts in political loyalties, in particular among Cossacks who fought on behalf of the Whites and all too soon swapped their allegiance and joined the Red Army.[23] Indeed there were instances in which Red Army soldiers were charged with perpetrating pogroms and were harshly punished. In one such case, in mid-1920, the Revolutionary Tribunal tried 166 Red Cavalry soldiers for participating in twenty-five pogroms carried out in the region of Podolia. As a result, 138 soldiers were shot and 28 sentenced to life in prison or forced labor.

The public discussion of this violence was, however, suppressed.[24] While condemning "banditry," the Bolshevik press usually abstained from mentioning the involvement of Soviet forces in instances of anti-Jewish violence, eschewing all references to Red antisemitism.

At the local level, whenever the culprits were not well-known leaders of one of the armies or insurgent groups involved in the conflict—in which case the Soviets made the effort to take legal action against them—seeking justice largely depended on the initiative and the persistence of the pogrom victims or their family members. They had to track down those responsible for the killing and the looting, turn them over to Soviet authorities (central ones, when local ones seemed unresponsive), and fight for property restitution. In Dubovo, for example, the investigation of the culprits depended entirely on the action taken by one local resident who sought revenge for his murdered family.[25] In the presence of local authorities who might have supported the condemnation of anti-Jewish violence de jure but not always de facto, pressing charges and testifying against neighbors was not always an easy task. It entailed determination and bravery, especially because of the possibility of retaliation by the perpetrators. A Soviet report from the town of Ovruch, in northern Ukraine, blamed the Jews themselves for the unsuccessful investigation. It acknowledged that victims tended to abstain from naming those involved in carrying out the pogrom even when they personally knew the perpetrators, because of fear of reprisal. As a consequence, stated the report, "the accomplices of the pogromists roam freely, and some are even employed by the local Soviet power."[26]

Taking advantage of the Soviets' official condemnation of antisemitism, many Jews did appeal to the authorities and worked the system, at times successfully. In September 1920, nineteen residents of Slovechno (Slovechne), a town in the Zhitomir region, addressed a petition to Soviet local authorities. It resulted in the investigation and indictment of Dimitryi Dubnitskiy, 26, and Alexander Khilevich, 18, for their active participation in the June 1919 pogrom, in which seventy-two Jews were killed and one hundred were wounded. The military tribunal found the two young men guilty of "national hatred against the Jewish people and of anti-Soviet tendencies." The case was then handed over to the Volhynia Revolutionary Tribunal of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine.[27] The fact that the head and secretary of the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Volhynia province were both Jewish might have swayed the decision to confirm, on March 31, 1921, the sentence by the military tribunal. After all, empowerment also meant justice and revenge. But the verdict's wording differs considerably from the one produced by the

local tribunal. The official indictment issued by the provincial tribunal used the term "banditry," and it did not mention pogrom activity. The two young men were sentenced to death as "enemies of the working people." But their involvement in anti-Jewish violence and antisemitic deeds, which had originally spurred the Slovechno Jewish residents' petition to Soviet authorities, went unmentioned.[28]

Regardless of the indictment's wording, the sentence was never carried out. The General Amnesty Declaration endorsed by the Central Executive Committee allowed tribunals to amend the sentences of those found guilty of crimes perpetrated before November 1920. The two felons thus had the right to appeal to the Supreme Court of Cassation,[29] and indeed they did. As in numerous other instances, the Court of Cassation reviewed the death sentence and overruled the decision made by the provincial tribunal.[30] The Soviet double standard of officially condemning the violence of the pogroms, while avoiding a consistent public discussion thereof, might have also been encouraged by the general process of granting amnesty to members of the counter-revolution. As a way to integrate them into the new society as loyal citizens, many convicts were pardoned for crimes they had committed during the civil war. Moreover, the Soviets feared and vigorously eschewed any possible association—rather widespread at the popular level—between Jews and Bolsheviks. Many perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence, in particular those who had not fought on behalf of one particular army, but had just taken advantage of the utter chaos to plunder or murder, were released and not convicted. Their crimes were ignored by the state.[31]

Press coverage of investigations and trials reveals the Soviet ambivalence in evoking the pogroms. While cases of defendants sentenced to death for participating in a "Jewish pogrom" were occasionally addressed without equivocation, most trial reports omitted explicit references to the nature of the violence. The charges usually included the vague term of "banditry," which denoted reactionary and anti-Soviet behavior.[32] In general, the Yiddish-language press employed more frequently than the Russian and Ukrainian press the terms "antisemitism" and "pogrom" in lieu of *banditizm*. After all, the Yiddish press addressed a Jewish audience only and therefore could not do too much harm in disrupting the alleged brotherhood of peoples—the purported equilibrium among ethnic groups that the new system celebrated in order to build Soviet society. Moreover, an open discussion of antisemitism in Yiddish served to strengthen the Jews' political allegiance.

But the Yiddish press could also reject and criticize the use of neutral terms to discuss anti-Jewish brutality. In the fall of 1929, for example, the regional

courts in Pervomaisk and Mariupol, in southeastern Ukraine, sentenced three pogromists to death for attacking Jewish settlements and killing Jews. When the highest Soviet court in Ukraine annulled the verdicts, deeming the perpetrators mere "hooligans," the central Yiddish daily of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, *Der Shtern* (The Star) promptly protested. "The highest court should reconsider the case," wrote the newspaper. It also demanded an explanation for the "irrational" decision that elicited discontent among local Jews and "even poor peasants." The newspaper called for a new trial, in effect reprimanding Soviet authorities for downplaying the real nature of the crime. According to the Yiddish daily's investigation, local authorities knew full well that the pogromists were former members of the Makhno band, which had terrorized the Jews in the Pervomaisk region, forcing them to flee.[33] The Yiddish daily also requested some further investigation in the case of Grigory Bondar, who was originally sentenced to death for participating in the Cherkassy pogrom. The highest court of Ukraine rescinded the sentence and, as the Yiddish newspaper lamented, "Bondar—a pogromist and a class enemy—wandered freely through the streets of Cherkassy."[34]

The intensity and pervasiveness of the violence and chaos that enveloped society during the civil war produced a more complicated and expanded version of a pogrom. Compared to what had emerged in late Imperial Russia, the civil war diversified the perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence. There were instances in which Jewish thieves and criminals were brought to court and put on trial by Soviet authorities for actively engaging in looting Jewish property. Violence easily spanned gender lines: many of those accused of participating in the pogroms against the Jewish population were Ukrainian and Russian women. In several instances, the Revolutionary Tribunal charged women with partaking in the violence and exploiting the chaos to pillage their Jewish neighbors.[35] The wives of some of the atamans, the leaders of the Cossack units, eagerly seized the property looted by their husbands during the attacks on the Jewish settlements, thus encouraging them to commit violence and murder.[36] During the October 4–7, 1919, pogrom in Kiev, which resulted in the death and rape of dozens of Jews, a notice appeared on the streets of the city. It appealed to Ukrainian and Russian women and incited them into playing an active role in the anti-Jewish violence. The notice read as follows: "Women! It is your turn to do something for the sake of our suffering Russia, boycott everything that is Jewish, and spread this idea as much and as far as you can. Remember—this will be for them worse than all other pogroms, and they will leave Russia. Do not buy from or sell to the Jews. . . . Boycott the Jews!"[37] Addressed to women, the words aggressively promoted ethnic

cleansing. These manifestations of anti-Jewish violence shed light on some of the complicated and multilayered dimensions of the 1919 pogroms and their perpetrators' identity. From the Soviets' vantage point, however, the ethnic and gender diversity of the perpetrators was irrelevant. This diversity only confirmed the very nature of the pogroms themselves as mere expressions of the bestiality of the counter-revolution, which enveloped everyone regardless of antisemitism.

And Then Came Schwarzbard

On May 25, 1926, near the Gilbert bookstore on rue Racine and boulevard Saint-Michel, on the Left Bank of Paris, Symon Petliura, the head of the Ukrainian government-in-exile, was assassinated by Scholem Schwarzbard. Petliura had relocated to the French capital in 1924, after fleeing the victorious Red Army. A Jewish anarchist from Bessarabia who grew up in Podolia, Schwarzbard held Petliura personally responsible for the pogroms in Ukraine, during which he lost fourteen family members. The assassination of Petliura, the ensuing arrest of Schwarzbard, and the sensational trial in Paris received extensive coverage in the Soviet press.[38] Moreover, immediately following the arrest of Schwarzbard, an all-Ukrainian ad hoc Soviet organization began to collect personal statements and eyewitness accounts from victims and bystanders in order to confirm the role that Petliura played in the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence. Together with documents from the vast pogrom archive assembled since 1920 by the Soviet Jewish Committee, the Evobshchestkom, the Bolshevik government eventually sent these materials to Paris to be used as evidence in the Schwarzbard trial.[39] To obtain full credibility among the Paris judges, the Soviets even collected corroboration of the victims' identity from local rabbis and burial societies (*chevrah kaddishas*), institutions that had increasingly lost authority in Bolshevik society.[40]

A close connection existed between the Schwarzbard trial, the Soviet campaign against antisemitism, and the rise of real (or alleged) antisemitism in Ukraine. Not unlike the dynamics set in motion in the Ukrainian diasporic community by the Petliura-Schwarzbard events, the discussion of the trial in the Soviet Union exacerbated the tensions between Jews and Ukrainians.[41] The wide discussion of the trial in the Soviet press possibly contributed to the 1926 spike in antisemitism, which might even have set the stage for some of the instances of ritual murder accusation.[42] The Ukrainian émigré community in France delegitimized Schwarzbard's position, branding him a communist

agent who killed Petliura following GPU orders. This view cast Schwarzbard as a puppet in the hands of the Soviet government and reinforced the myth of Jewish Bolshevism.[43]

On its part, the Soviet secret police used the trial as a pretext to carry out a systematic campaign against Ukrainian nationalism and its leaders. This campaign re-emerged with force in 1929 when the GPU liquidated underground Ukrainian organizations for allegedly conspiring against the Soviet Union on behalf of Ukrainian independence. In one such instance, the Soviet secret police uncovered an illegal organization operating in Kiev. Led by a number of academics who spread Ukrainian "nationalism" among the local youth, the organization encouraged them to celebrate the memory of their national leader, Petliura, who "was murdered by our national enemy" (i.e., Jews or communists). According to the GPU report, the organization was also involved in the distribution of leaflets near the Saint Sophia Cathedral, on the occasion of the secret requiem service held to commemorate Petliura's death.[44]

The preoccupation with Petliura was ideologically straightforward and allowed the Soviets to accomplish two objectives: on the one hand, it confirmed the wickedness of the political enemy embodied by Ukrainian nationalism, allowing them to conduct purges in Soviet Ukraine, including people who had nothing to do with Petliura. On the other hand, the Soviet obsession with Petliura could be used to circumvent the difficult question of the neighbors' involvement in the pogroms of the civil war.[45] As news about Schwarzbard's deeds echoed throughout the cities and towns of the Soviet Union,[46] the public discussion of the trial not only unleashed anti-Jewish animosity, it also empowered Soviet Jews. For many who had experienced the pogroms first-hand, the Soviet position on Petliura's assassination and on the Schwarzbard trial became a powerful reminder that the state was on their side. According to one source, the Jewish religious community's governing board in Moscow sent a telegram to the chief rabbi of France in which it expressed its support for the French sense of justice and the ruling "against the pogromist who wore the garb of a national hero."[47]

Some Jews who had kept silent before, confused by the Soviet ambivalence in prosecuting perpetrators in the aftermath of the civil war, took the courage to speak up and press charges against the perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence. In October 1926, a number of Jewish families who survived a pogrom in the Ukrainian town of Tarashcha voiced their eagerness to testify in the Schwarzbard trial; they held Petliura personally responsible for the massacre in their village, following which Jewish homes

were demolished and plowed through, and the memory of the local Jewish community entirely removed.[48] From 1926 to 1928 many pogromists were summoned to court, arrested, and sentenced to prison or to death, mostly as a result of the Jewish readiness to speak up. In May 1928, one of the chief leaders in the February 15, 1919, Proskurov pogrom—the emblematic site of anti-Jewish violence during the civil war because of the sheer number of victims—was sentenced to eight years in prison.[49] During that same month, a former resident of Proskurov, whose family had been murdered there, identified one of the main perpetrators in the massacre strolling through the streets of Odessa (the city he had moved to); he pressed charges and had him arrested.[50]

The Soviet position on Schwarzbard elicited a sense of empowerment by Jews, unearthing unresolved injustices from the past, some of which dated back to the tsarist period. In the summer of 1926, ten former members of the tsarist police force were brought to trial in the city of Polotsk, in the Vitebsk district of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. They were accused of participating in a case of anti-Jewish violence that occurred some twenty-two years earlier, namely, the pogroms of 1904 and 1905, which saw the death of numerous Jewish workers and members of the local Jewish self-defense unit. As many as forty witnesses—most of them Jews who had lost close relatives during the pogrom—testified in court.[51]

In other instances, Jews who had been denied the right to see anti-Jewish violence punished under the tsar now took revenge, possibly even using the pogroms to take down their current enemies. Many came to occupy new positions of authority and exploit newly established power structures in order to wreak vengeance. In 1926, a number of Jews pressed charges against perpetrators in the pogrom that occurred in 1903 in the city of Gomel, in the BSSR.[52] In June 1926, Jews pressed charges against a group of perpetrators in a 1905 pogrom, which took place in the Russian city of Egoriesk following the October Manifesto. The Soviet court found guilty the pogromists, who in 1905 had been pardoned by the tsar himself.[53] They were sentenced to prison, and their property was confiscated.[54] To be sure, the Soviet courts eagerly condemned pogrom perpetrators involved in pre-revolutionary anti-Jewish violence. Rooted in the reactionary tsarist regime, these instances of anti-Jewish violence were ideologically harmless, and like similar indictments of Ukrainian nationalists, they could be easily inscribed into the Bolshevik narrative of the counter-revolution.[55]

With regard to pogroms, the Soviet politics of memory evolved in cycles.[56] It swayed between acknowledging and downplaying the specificities

of anti-Jewish violence, while revealing all along an inherent ambiguity in the treatment of its perpetrators. The state did not deny the violence against Jews but encrypted it into a tightly controlled narrative. When the events were at odds with the newly established regime's interests and priorities of building socialism, Soviet forces appeared hesitant and preferred not to investigate and punish the perpetrators. With time the Soviet pledge to remember the pogroms weakened and withered, as the killing of Jews receded in the muddle of banditry, hooliganism, and counter-revolution.

On Universal and Particular Sites of Memory

If one considers the pogrom as a site of memory, a *lieu de mémoire*, and examines the place that it occupied in Soviet society, one notices the emergence of two distinct narratives of anti-Jewish violence that coexisted until the early 1930s.[57] On the one hand, the numerous accounts that appeared in the press, in propaganda literature, in Soviet school textbooks, as well as in the rich body of literature (political and belletristic alike) throughout the interwar period reveal that the pogrom was depicted as a specifically Jewish site of memory. Here, the particular story of Jewish suffering and violence that targeted Jews took center stage. After all, condemning the pogroms was in agreement with the Bolsheviks' official struggle against antisemitism. On the other hand, the same trend to overlook the Jewish identity of the victims and the antisemitic nature of the attacks, which emerged during the trials, gradually infused and eventually came to dominate Soviet public discourse. The tendency to neglect the Jewish dimension of the violence of the civil war tallied with the tendency to commemorate and publicly discuss the pogrom as a quintessential event that belonged exclusively to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century tsarist Russia.

The brutality of the pogroms of the civil war was put on display in August 1923, when the Soviet Jewish Committee installed an exhibition in Moscow, in its offices on Malaia Bronnaia Street. The very existence of the exhibition confirms that the memory of the pogroms was in the interest of the Soviets, and that this state acknowledged Jewish suffering, sanctioning its commemoration. The Soviet Jewish Committee statistics bureau—which collected evidence of the crimes, data on the number of casualties, victims' testimonies and claims of physical violence, property loss or damage,[58] photographs of the killing sites, as well as legends, proverbs, and jokes about the pogroms—set up the exhibition.[59] The entrance to the first exhibit hall displayed literature on the pogroms, including the brochure *Pogroms in Belorussia*, issued by the Jewish section of the Narkomnats,[60] *The Jewish Catastrophe in Ukraine* by

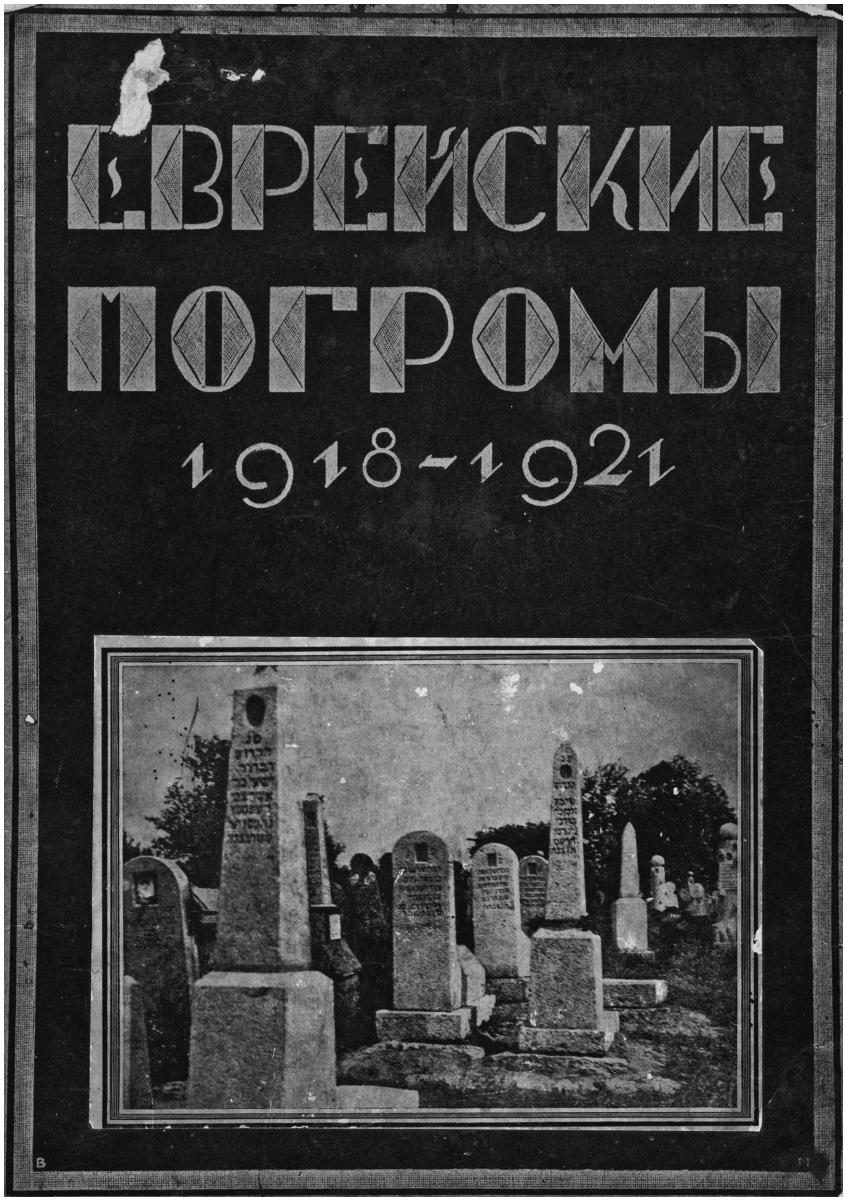
L. Khazanovich, as well as reports on specific massacres in the towns of Tetiiev and Boguslav (Bohuslav). This was followed by some thirty-five wooden panels with posters of diagrams, statistics, and more than three hundred photographs of the murdered victims, the perpetrators who had been put on trial by Soviet authorities, the sites of the massacres (buildings or pits), as well as the mass graves and pogrom memorials that were set up in different towns and cities to commemorate the victims. The headings on the photographs were mostly in Yiddish, with some in Ukrainian. The inscriptions on the posters were in Russian. The exhibition ended with three actual life-size wooden panels depicting two Jewish children and an armed "bandit" about to toss at them a hand grenade. "They seemed real," noted one of the organizers.[61] A photograph of the massive pogrom memorial in Trostianets loomed large. Poster 9, for example, displayed some photographs of the victims, including one of a four-year-old boy with his stomach perforated, one of a seven-year old girl with a shattered skull, and one of a "Soviet employee who heroically defended people from the bandits, and was ruthlessly murdered by cutting out his organs and throwing his body in the river."[62] Poster 19 included forty-nine photos of pogromists who had been sentenced to death and shot by Soviet authorities.[63]

A positive review of the exhibition appeared in *Pravda*, the main organ of the Communist Party. It highlighted the ruthless violence perpetrated by the enemies of the Revolution against Jews. "It is hard to believe that human beings could have done this," wrote the reviewer about the photographs on display. The review also imposed the class-struggle principle on the events and reminded the reader that in the midst of the pogroms the Jewish bourgeoisie took sides with the counter-revolution, "as the Rothschilds and Mendelsohns gave money to Denikin to kill the Jews."[64] The official propaganda literature sanctioned this view, condemning antisemitism as anti-Soviet. According to this position not only did the pogroms target exclusively poor Jews, leaving the wealthy ones unscathed, but non-Jewish workers also organized self-defense units to protect the members of the Jewish proletariat. Thus, "the generals who raped and killed poor Jews, hid the rich ones who offered them money, bribed them . . . to defend their class interests as some members of the Jewish bourgeoisie joined in supporting the pogromists."[65] In contrast, as was clearly noted by the author of a Soviet pamphlet on antisemitism, "the Russian worker never took part in the pogrom because he never saw the Jewish worker as an enemy but only as an exploited brother."[66] In other words, based on these false and unsubstantiated statements, pogromists could never be "workers, peasants, and communists insofar as they were also attacked."[67] Some accounts of the pogroms presented Petliura's supporters as allies of the

Zionists; this allowed the Soviets to attack Ukrainian and Jewish nationalism at the same time.[68] While the Soviet state welcomed a partnership with the Jewish toiling masses, it refused an alliance with the Jews as an undifferentiated entity and combatted bitterly the Jewish bourgeoisie.

The 1923 exhibit was eventually reproduced in book form. Entitled *Jewish Pogroms, 1918-1921*, it was issued as an oversized photo album in September 1926 by the Moscow-based publishing house School and Book, which also distributed Soviet school textbooks. The book was published for educational purposes, to reach a broader public, and remind the Soviet reader that anti-Jewish violence had become unacceptable. The author of one of the reviews in the Soviet press warned against showing the volume to children because of its harrowing and graphic content: "[I]f you own this book, hide it and make sure that it does not fall into the hands of kids . . . may they study the history of the civil war without this album and its sorrowful black color!"[69] The book did not reproduce some of the more controversial photographs that could impinge on the politically sensitive issue of the identity of the victims, the perpetrators, and the profiteers. The book did not duplicate the images of razed synagogue buildings, of the boots that a group of Mogilev-Podolskii (Mohyliv-Podilskyi) cobblers made from the Torah scrolls desecrated during the pogroms, or of the wallet made from the Hebrew scripture's parchment in some town in the Kiev province.[70]

A rich pogrom literature—mostly in Yiddish—chronicled the anti-Jewish violence of the civil war, casting it as a Jewish site of memory. In 1920, Peretz Markish wrote a poem about the pile of corpses lying at the center of the marketplace in the shtetl of Gorodische (Horodysche), where Jews were murdered during the pogrom. He described the bodies in gruesome detail, and he dedicated the poem to the Jews "killed in Ukraine, butchered in a mound in Gorodishche."[71] Dovid Bergelson wrote a short story about the revenge fantasy of a young Jew who planned to assassinate a pogromist in retaliation for the murder of Jews during the civil war. He wrote the story two years before Symon Petliura was actually assassinated by Scholem Schwarzbard.[72] The year of Schwarzbard's trial and acquittal, Itsik Kipnis, a native of Volhynia, wrote a most powerful and distressing account of the pogrom in the town of Slovechno, which he himself had witnessed. First published in Yiddish in 1926, and in Russian in 1930, the novella *Months and Days* recorded how neighbors ruthlessly killed neighbors. "Those who were half dead were left to lie in their torment and were not taken to a grave," Kipnis observed, "and the dead were everywhere."[73] These works openly discussed the extreme violence of the pogroms acknowledging Jewish suffering.



The photograph on the cover of the memorial book *Jewish Pogroms, 1918–1921* shows the tombstones of victims of a 1919 pogrom. The inscriptions in Hebrew on the tombstones refer to the victims as martyrs. Published in Moscow in 1926, the book includes dozens of photos recording the brutality of the pogroms, the killing sites, the victims, and the perpetrators. *Courtesy of the Blavatnik Archive, New York.*

The Soviet pogrom literature also included an array of memoirs by Jewish and non-Jewish authors, which began to appear as early as 1920. These texts dwelled on the sheer brutality of the enemies' crimes against the Jews: whether committed by Ukrainian forces, the White army, or insurgent peasant groups, the crimes confirmed the Soviet truism that antisemitism was inherently counter-revolutionary. An early example of this literature is a short memoir published in Odessa in 1920. Entitled *The Thirty Days of the Jewish Pogrom in the Town of Krivoe-Ozero. From the Personal Observations and Experiences of a Russian Teacher*, the memoir discussed the anti-Jewish violence in one shtetl in Podolia.[74] In this highly political and yet very personal account, the Russian teacher A. F. Maleev accused the Ukrainian authorities in Odessa of inaction as they failed to stop the killings in the shtetls; he described the eerie silence in the Jewish cemetery strewn with corpses and body parts, including those of Maltsman, his Jewish fellow teacher at the local high school; and, finally, he voiced triumphantly his faith in the ultimate victory of the Bolshevik forces over the political reaction, and in the certainty that "no pogrom, no White terror, no spilling of Jewish blood can stop the socialist revolution."[75]

One pogrom account, in particular, captures the composite nature of the Soviet politics of memory of anti-Jewish violence, especially during the 1920s. Originally written in Yiddish by Rachel Faygnberg, the only woman who collaborated closely with Elias Tcherikower in documenting the civil war pogroms in Ukraine, *The Chronicle of a Dead City: The Destruction of Dubovo* was issued in Warsaw in 1926, and republished in 1928 in Leningrad, in a Russian translation.[76] This powerful chronicle of the 1919 events in the shtetl of Dubovo was chosen for obvious reasons: here, the Red Army soldiers' behavior did not contradict the dogma of antisemitism as fundamentally counter-revolutionary, nor did it clash with the predetermined Soviet vision of the past.[77] Apart from its short introduction, which warns the reader about the author's ideological primitiveness, her inability to understand the profundity of the principle of class struggle and the specific political circumstances that gave rise to the counter-revolution, the Russian version is similar to the Yiddish original, which was produced outside the Soviet Union.[78] There is no attempt to artificially apply a Marxist interpretation to the events. Here, all Jews are targeted for violence, regardless of their economic background and social class. Even Rabbi Berdyczewski, who was killed during the third pogrom in the town, appears as an exceptionally positive figure in both the Yiddish and the Russian edition.

During the second half of the 1920s, the Soviet government invested a substantial effort to fight antisemitism. In response to its growth, which was recorded by the Soviet secret police among clerks, Party officials, and factory managers, the state launched a systematic campaign to combat this legacy of tsarist Russia. The campaign included the publication of propaganda literature that chronicled the rise of antisemitism, explaining its roots through a Marxist lens, and condemning it as anti-Soviet. In their discussion of the pogroms, most of these pamphlets focused on two main features. First, they acknowledged that Jews (at least destitute ones) were singled out and exposed to brutal violence during the civil war. In order to convey the depravity of the perpetrators, the authors drew the readers' attention to the inhumane nature of the crimes, dwelling on gruesome details of gendered violence, and graphically reporting instances of rape of Jewish girls and women. The same stories of torture and martyrdom were reiterated in different pamphlets. Interestingly, they built off of traditional Jewish historical texts that recorded sexualized violence in pre-modern times, in particular during the Chmielnitski uprising, the Cossack rebellion against Polish rule in seventeenth-century Ukraine that instigated the massacres of 1648–49. Some pamphlets referred directly to the work of "bourgeois" historian Simon Dubnow, and even quoted the poem *In the City of Slaughter* by Chaim Nahman Bialik.[79] Both writers were in disfavor in the USSR because of their connection to Jewish nationalism and Zionism.

Second, the anti-antisemitism pamphlets heralded the pogroms as violence carried out by an abstract political enemy whose ideas and behaviors were largely shaped by tsarist reactionary politics. Insofar as the Soviets viewed the pogroms as centrally planned by a specific police or military force in opposition to the Revolution, the epitome of pogrom in Soviet memory became Kishinev, not Proskurov. Writing in 1928 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kishinev pogrom, a Soviet journalist reported, "Even though the Kishinev pogrom was not the first neither the most significant in the long and rich series of pogroms in tsarist and capitalist Russia . . ., it will always stand out for its . . . connection to the government."[80] It might even be that the Soviet press carried more accounts of the 1903 Kishinev pogrom than of the 1919 Proskurov massacre. On February 15, 1929, ten years after the pogrom, the chief Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union made no mention of Proskurov, but on September 14, 1928, it marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Gomel pogrom of 1903 with a long report about the event.[81] To be sure, the anti-Jewish violence perpetrated during the civil war did not fit well with the official ideology: these pogroms had not been orchestrated by one evil regime such as tsarist Russia, the avowed enemy of the Bolshevik system.

In many ways the pogroms of the civil war had been a folk movement, with thousands of perpetrators, including workers and peasants. As such, they became a problem for the Soviets once they realized the scope of the working class and peasant involvement in the violence. An honest portrayal of the pogroms of 1919 could thus shatter the myth of proletarian solidarity, the unity of the toilers of all peoples; as a popular movement, the pogroms of the civil war undermined the Soviet invention of the brotherhood of the Soviet peoples.[82]

Scenes from Tsarist Pogroms

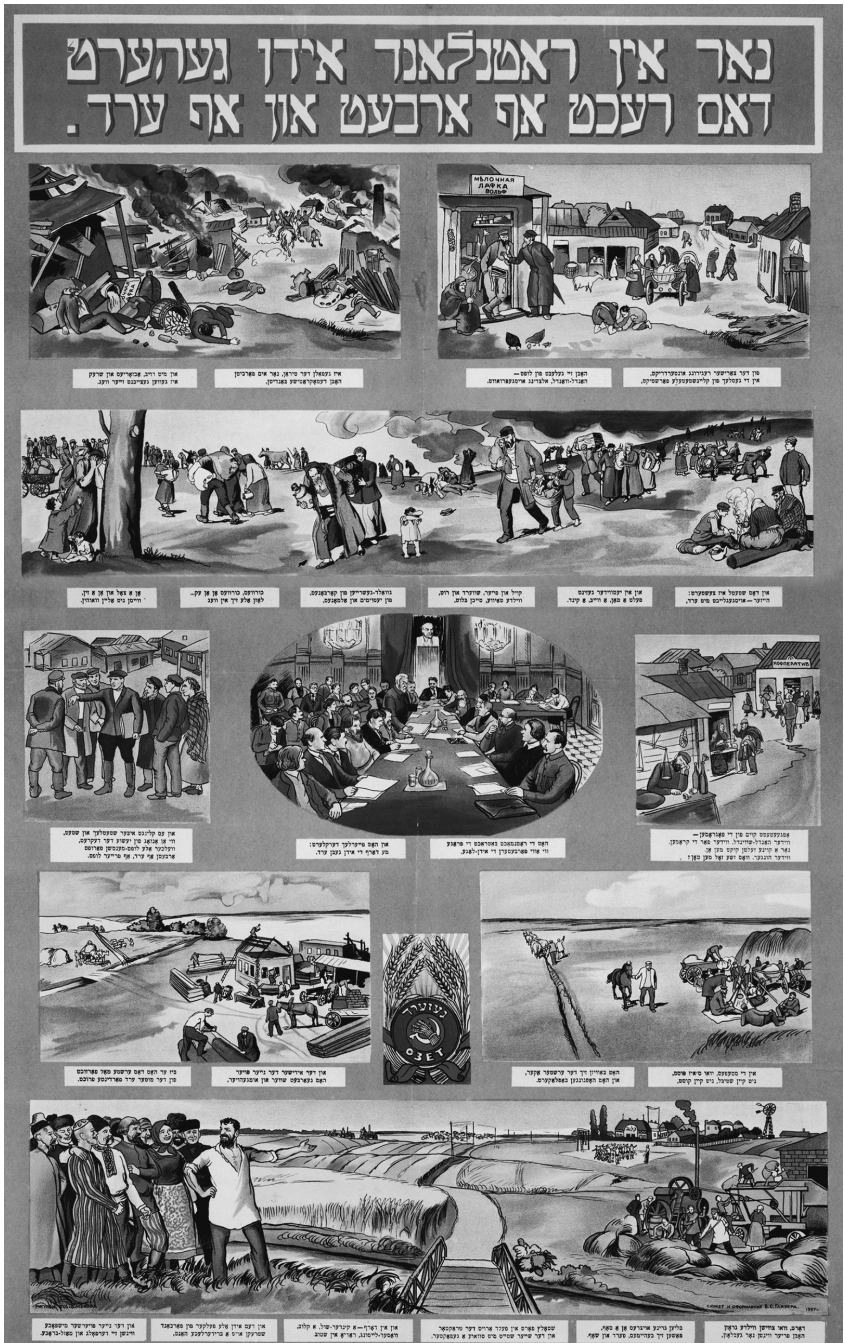
On April 11, 1927, the premiere of the film *Mabl: The Bloody Stream* was held in Leningrad. Based on Scholem Aleichem's most openly political work, *The Flood* (1907), the story featured the events of the first Russian Revolution and the ways in which they affected Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement, in particular through the experience of young Jews who joined the bloody events of 1905. Produced by the central cinema organizations in the Soviet Union—Sovkino and Proletkino—and performed mostly by the actors of the Moscow-based Hebrew theater Habimah, the movie included a scene about a pogrom. Filmed in 1926 in the city of Vinnitsa and the nearby shtetl of Litin, this scene captures four distinctive features of the Soviet politics of memory of the pogroms.[83]

First, the representation of the pogrom was as ideological as it was antihistorical. In the film's rendition, as in the Soviet constructed memory of the events, the violence targeted exclusively destitute Jews, while it spared the wealthy members of the community, who joined the tsarist leaders in a class alliance against the proletariat. Second, the intersection of art and politics clashed with real-life memories, a reminder that the recollection of the violence of 1919 still lingered in the region in 1926. The shtetl of Litin, together with other towns in the Vinnitsa region (including Trostianets), had witnessed violent pogroms in the summer of 1919, which had not spared the Jewish bourgeoisie.[84] Inspired by his art credo of naturalism and realism, film director Yevgenyi Ivanov-Barkov hired real Cossacks and former tsarist gendarmes, as well as a number of local peasants, to enact the pogrom scene.[85] When asked to attack the actors playing the role of religious Jews, the "pogromists" showed too much enthusiasm. "This was realism with a vengeance," argued the assistant director, "As it turned out, for quite a few among the pogromists . . . rehearsals were unnecessary."[86] Third, the artistic representation of anti-Jewish violence was a sensitive issue for the Soviets. As such it

became one of the reasons, albeit not the chief one, that the movie was never released to the public. Narkompros RSFSR and Glavrepertkom, the official institutions vetoing the artistic expressions that challenged Soviet realism, categorically forbade the distribution of the movie. One of the justifications was that the pogrom was presented "in a displeasing way."[87] Finally, it is revealing that the only pogrom scene included in a Soviet film depicted anti-Jewish violence from pre-revolutionary tsarist Russia, while it left out the horrors of the civil war.

Indeed, the Soviet politics of memory imposed its qualitative choice on anti-Jewish violence, electing which pogroms to remember and publicly discuss and which ones to ignore and eventually forget. A colorful poster used to publicize the work of OZET, the Society for Settling Toiling Jews on Land, which promoted the "normalization" and Sovietization of Jews through agricultural labor, echoed, for example, the Soviet-tsarist dichotomy of "better now than then."[88] This temporal comparison, which remained a reference point of Soviet-Jewish patriotism and identity throughout the Bolshevik experiment, emphasized the miseries of Jewish life before 1917 by highlighting tsarist antisemitism, the existence of the Pale of Settlement, the quotas for Jewish university students, and the pogroms. At the same time, it played them off against the infinite joys of Jewish life after the Bolshevik Revolution, characterized by the absence of anti-Jewish legislation. In this spirit, the 1928 OZET poster depicted the pogroms of the civil war as part of a continuum of anti-Jewish violence, which began with the "tsarist tyrant" and continued under the "democratic bandits." Naturally, only the Soviets could put an end to this perpetual condition of violence, in this case by promoting the settlement of Jewish toilers on land and the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements in Ukraine, Crimea, and Belorussia.

The poster also appeared on the back cover of *Tribuna* (Tribune of the Soviet Jewish Community), the Russian-language journal published by OZET from 1927 to 1937.[89] Some rare discussion of the effects that the civil war pogroms had on Jewish life appeared in the OZET publication, and included accounts of the impact of the violence on shtetl life[90]; the looting and murder of Mountain Jews during the pogroms in the Caucasus[91]; and pogroms that occurred beyond Soviet borders, in nearby Poland and Romania. In one unusual editorial on the pogroms published in *Tribuna*, OZET executive and Soviet economist Yuri Larin admitted the participation of tens of thousands of Ukrainian peasants in the violence, something usually dismissed in Soviet memory. But he also identified them as *kulaki*, or peasants wealthy enough to own a farm and hire labor, thus inferring that their socioeconomic status



A 1928 poster issued by OZET, the Society for Settling Toiling Jews on Land, promotes the Sovietization of Jews through agricultural labor. Through drawings with captions in Yiddish, it narrates the history of the Jews in Russia, from the persecution they experienced under the tsar to the liberation brought by the Soviets. The headline reads, "Only in the Soviet Union do Jews have the right to work the land." *Yeshiva University Museum, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig Jesselson*.



A detail from the OZET poster depicts a pogrom in which the attackers storm through the town's street bringing death and destruction. The town is in flames, the shops have been looted, and bodies are left strewn on the street. The caption in Yiddish reads: "And as the tyrant fell, democratic bandits took his place, and their path was marked by robbery, brutality, and terror." *Yeshiva University Museum, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig Jesselson*.

drove them to trail blaze the looting expeditions against the Jewish towns.[92] And while Larin conceded the many causes that led to the pogroms, including White propaganda on "Jewish Bolshevism," widespread notions of Jews as deceitful spies, and Jewish cultural differences due to language, looks, gesticulation, and religious beliefs, he ultimately snubbed nuance in favor of the Marxist script. Emphasizing the role that class played in the violence, Larin argued that "of the two hundred thousand Jews murdered, there were no wealthy ones, no bankers, no factory owners, no manufacturers, no well-off merchants, no famous speculators."[93]

Which Story to Tell, Which Story to Teach?

In 1929, the Leningrad Traveling Theater performed in different local factories a play that addressed the theme of antisemitism. Entitled *The Court Is in Session!*, the play included alluring music and artistic scenography to impart the Soviet lessons of the day on the pressing social issues of hooliganism, alcoholism, and violence against women. It also included a scene on pogroms. "The showing of tsarist pogroms infects the audience with unbelievable emotions," wrote a critic, "as it forces in particular the youth to look,

to experience, and to understand." [94] The violence performed on stage did not date back to the civil war.

The emphasis on pre-revolutionary pogroms also shaped the Soviet historiography of anti-Jewish violence produced in the interwar period. While both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars included the 1881–82 and the 1903–6 pogroms in their research,[95] with Kishinev as the symbol of anti-Jewish violence in pre-revolutionary Russia, they generally avoided a discussion of the civil war pogroms. Established in 1919, and funded by the Commissariat for Education, the Commission for the Investigation of the History of Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia published two scholarly collections of archival documents. Issued in 1919 and co-edited by Simon Dubnow and the young lawyer and scholar Grigory Krasnyi-Admoni, the first volume focused on the Kishinev pogrom; the second volume, which appeared in 1923 and was edited by Krasny-Admony alone (Dubnow had fled Soviet Russia for independent Lithuania in 1921), focused on the pogroms of 1881–82.[96] In the introduction to the first volume, the editors stated their intention to prove the involvement of regional and central tsarist authorities in organizing and encouraging the pogroms, as well as their commitment to collect and publish materials from the state archives, making them available to scholars, publicists, and political activists.[97] The introductory essay also announced the commission's intention to publish a volume on the civil war pogroms. This never happened.[98]

In Soviet Jewish historiography the topic of the civil war pogroms remained largely confined to "bourgeois" scholarship. For instance, for a "bourgeois" historian like Dubnow, antisemitism propelled Jewish history through an ongoing cycle of anti-Jewish legislation and persecution. This included pogroms. Soviet Jewish historians, on the other hand, focused on forces generating from within Jewish society. The real thrust in Jewish history was not the violence coming from without, perpetrated by the old regime, but the class war that reigned among Jews. The main reason for this shift was ideological. But it also stemmed from the attempt to normalize the development of Jewish history, showing that like the history of any other national or ethnic group even this story was made of class oppression carried out primarily by the *kahal*, the Jewish communal body "controlled" by Jewish oligarchs and religious elites.

This change of focus appears clear in the work of Soviet Jewish historian Osher Margolis. Here, the pogrom, as the climax of antisemitism, was no longer central to the narrative. Compared to the socioeconomic tensions

that shook the Jewish masses, it was recast as a secondary factor. The 1827 Cantonist decree,[99] which Margolis defined as a sort of "human trafficking" (*mentshhandl*), ignited the class struggle among Jews. Similarly, Margolis presented 1891 not only as the year of the well-known expulsion of Jews from Moscow but also as the year when hunger riots swept through Russia.[100] Antisemitism, and by extension the pogroms, thus relocated from the center to the margins of the narrative.

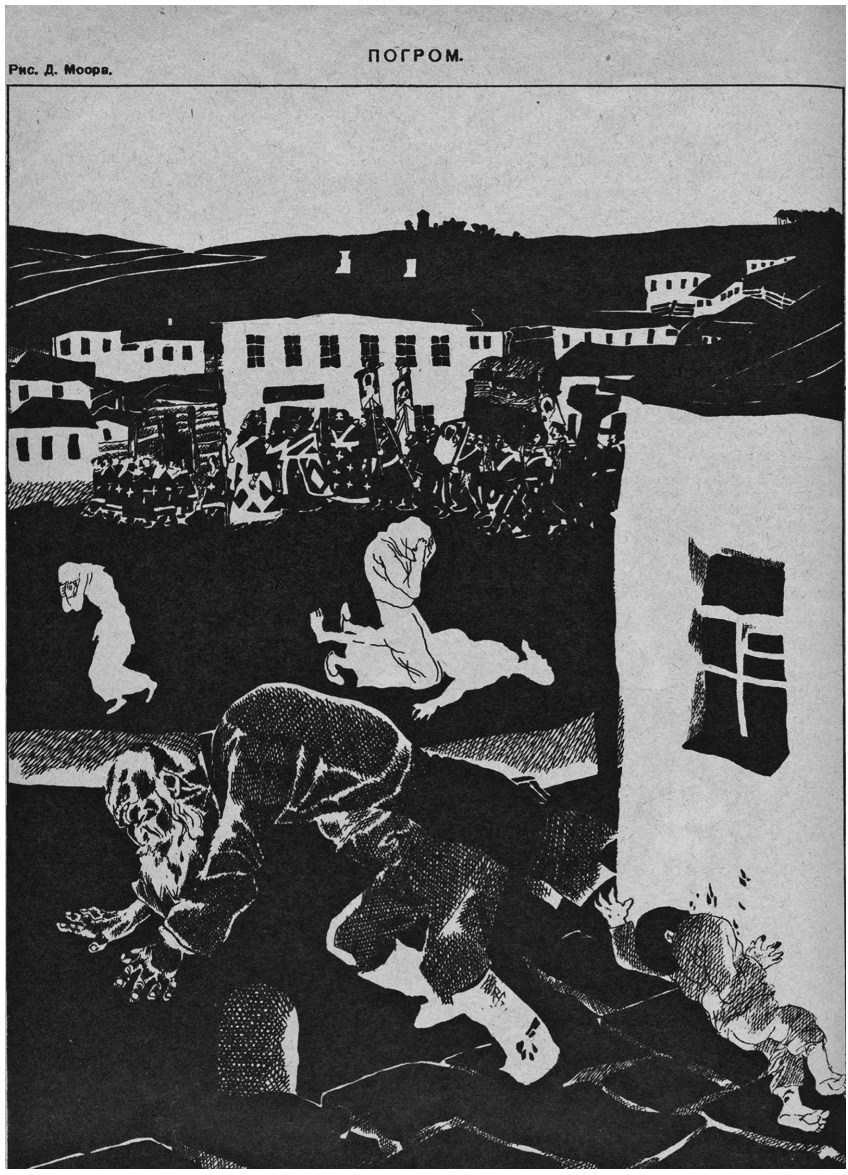
Of course, there were some limits to this Marxist tale of class struggle in Soviet Jewish historiography. In his 1929 *The History of Jewish Social Trends in Russia in the Nineteenth Century*, historian Israel Sosis discussed the socioeconomic roots of antisemitism, in particular in those Russian and Ukrainian urban centers that he designated as the epicenters of pre-revolutionary pogroms. In the assessment of the Jewish community's response to the pogroms, in particular in the treatment of the mutual aid fund created by the Jewish administrative body to rescue economically ruined Jews in the wake of the violence, Sosis eluded the purist Marxist position as he brought together exploiters and exploited classes. The Jewish community was not merely a source of harmful influences. It could also serve as the main guarantor of Jewish national self-help, the protector against the hatred of the surrounding population, and the instrument of self-preservation.[101]

The entries on anti-Jewish violence in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, the authoritative Soviet position on historical questions, confirm this same tendency to shift the focus away from the pogroms of the civil war. The entry on "Antisemitism" and the one on the "Jewish Pogroms," dated 1926 and 1932, respectively, focus heavily on 1881 and 1903–6, and discuss 1918–21 mostly in passing.[102] Relegating anti-Jewish violence to those two periods became a common feature in most discussions of antisemitism in Soviet schools. Though a number of textbooks in the Soviet Yiddish schools included excerpts from Itsik Kipnis's powerful account of the 1919 pogrom in the shtetl of Slovechno, history and social science students read almost exclusively about the pogroms of the 1880s and 1900s.[103] In Belorussia in the late 1920s, students enrolled in Yiddish elementary and middle schools read about the pogroms from the 1880s and from the 1905 Russian Revolution; they would then study World War I and the 1917 Revolution, and the establishment of the Evsektsiia, omitting the civil war entirely. They read Peretz Markish's poem *Volyn* on the future of the shtetl in Volhynia but did not read his powerful poem about the devastation of the pogroms in Ukraine.[104] Some

textbooks in the Yiddish schools in Ukraine mentioned the pogroms perpetrated by Denikin, Petliura, and the *kulaki*, who "murdered communists, revolutionary workers, and Jews."[105] A 1931 anthology for elementary schools in Belorussia mentioned the civil war pogroms only in relation to the anti-Bundist campaigns, making the totally false and fabricated case for the Jewish Socialist Party's active collaboration with Petliura.[106] The Yiddish literature and language curriculum for Soviet Jewish elementary and middle schools in Belorussia and Ukraine included a section on the civil war that focused primarily on the heroic struggle of the Red Army and the Red Cavalry but had very little on anti-Jewish violence.[107] As one can imagine, when remembering and discussing the events of 1918–21 both students and teachers had to exercise some caution and avoid crossing the fine line dictated by the Soviet politics of the past.[108]

The Tragedy of the (Jewish) People

The pogrom also emerged as a universal "site of memory," in which anti-Jewish violence became an emblem of common, universal suffering of Soviet citizens at the hands of the "counter-revolution." By focusing on the crimes committed by the "counter-revolutionary enemy," Soviet authorities and writers deemphasized the Jewish story of these attacks and its victims. Many Jewish communists, writers, and scholars (and thousands of young Jews) participated in this process, striving to disregard the particular focus on Jews as victims and choosing to explain the violence as an assault on the Revolution—of which they yearned to feel part. The pogrom could thus be cleared of its Jewish content. In a 1934 article that appeared in *The Godless at the Workplace*, the official publication of the League of Militant Atheists, Emelian Yaroslavskii wrote about the church's involvement in supporting criminal activities during the 1905 pogrom in Kiev. Complemented by an illustration depicting a pogrom, with an old man kneeling, a dead infant, women in despair, and a church procession in the background, the article made no mention of the victims' identity.[109] The pogrom could lose its specifically "Jewish" connotation. In the late 1920s, when the composer Grigorii Apanovich wrote a musical piece for piano and chorus to commemorate the events in Proskurov, he accepted the universal memory of the pogrom. In this musical composition, which was performed during the interwar period throughout Ukraine in memory of the pogrom victims, the Jewishness of the story receded into the background and was lost.



An illustration entitled "Pogrom" was published in 1934 in the journal *The Godless at the Workplace*, the official publication of the All-Union League of the Militant Godless, which fought against religion. The illustration depicts an old man kneeling, a dead infant, and women in despair. A church procession with members of the clergy and of the Black Hundreds, the monarchist ultranationalist organization that incited pogroms, are visible in the background. The accompanying article makes no mention of the anti-Jewish nature of the violence.

Here, the tragedy of Proskurov became the tragedy of the people, not the tragedy of the Jewish people.[110] Besides applying a universalizing tone to the events and victims of the massacre, the composition also seemed to mandate a degree of quiescence on the part of the Jews. Not only were the Jewish listeners asked to forget their specific grief and suppress the particular memory of suffering, but, as captured by the fourth stanza, they were also expected to desist from any form of revenge against the perpetrators:

The Proskurov Tragedy

Proskurov remembers and will remember
The tragedy of the people

It always carries these days of death and sorrow of many
In tears and in songs

Children died at the hands of the murderers
Tears and blood flowed, mountains of bodies collapsed to the ground
For what did these people die, all five thousand of them?
But we will not take vengeance.[111]

It always carries these days of death and sorrow of many
In tears and in songs

Culture is needed here—
The power and glory (and strength!) of the Soviets
Let us exert the force of "five in four,"[112]
Let us finish off the evil, let us prove to the world,
How people should exist!
How people should live, where truth triumphs.

It always carries these days of death and sorrow of many
In tears and in songs.

References to the pogroms of the civil war could surface in Jewish pocket calendars, small booklets published in Russian during the 1920s, which included the dates of both Jewish religious holidays and Soviet holidays. The calendars contained lists of names of those Jewish writers and activists who perished during the civil war. But they did not mention any specific official

date to commemorate the victims of the violence.[113] Yet, Jewish commemorative services for pogrom victims did take place in various cities and towns throughout the interwar period. Tolerated by the state, these informal ceremonies were relegated to a Jewish space and confined to Jewish memory. In his 1926 account of the pogrom in Ovruch, in Volhynia, Aron Dubenskii, who left the town during the civil war, described the events that led to the murder of 107 Jews. He then described the Jewish memorial ceremony that took place in Ovruch every year to honor the victims, as follows:

> Only the ravaged homes and the graves remain . . . , and they evoke the crimes. . . . Every year, on the day that marks the death of the victims, a requiem is officiated in their memory, in the synagogue. . . . [T]hat is when the whole world becomes a sea of tears and the synagogue turns into a small boat surrounded by those who are present and shed torrents of tears. Eternal rest and memory to the murdered ones, and may the murderers be damned in eternity![114]

In Soviet Kiev, for example, it was customary to commemorate the victims of the civil war pogroms on the day of Rosh Hashanah. Thousands of Jews would gather inside or around the synagogue building to recite collectively the mourner's *kaddish*, the prayer traditionally said as part of the mourning rituals and memorials in Judaism. This custom was still in practice in Kiev well into the second half of the 1930s. The memory of the pogroms persisted as a Jewish *lieu de mémoire*.[115]

Competing Memories

If in the midst of the pogroms the interest of the state essentially coincided with that of the Jews, during their aftermath the Soviet memory of the violence gradually came to collide with and grew apart from the Jewish memory of the violence. The interest of the state hinged primarily on the successful making of loyal Soviet citizens. Cultivating the public commemoration of anti-Jewish violence and systematically prosecuting old crimes could intensify the resentment of those citizens who would otherwise become law-abiding Soviet citizens or even devoted Bolsheviks. Desperate to create something new, and not only to destroy something historical, the Soviet regime accentuated the commonalities of universal suffering during the violence, even when this strategy targeted Jews specifically. The Soviet ambivalence in openly discussing anti-Jewish violence was reflected in the language used at times to

identify (or abstain from identifying) the victims. The killing of Jews could thus become universalized as the counter-revolution perpetrated widespread violence against "peaceful citizens."[116]

The choice of a universal memory of suffering over a Jewish particular claim for victimhood was predictable. The universal memory of the civil war, based on sacrifice and revolutionary innocence, became the legitimizing myth of the Soviet system until World War II.[117] The implementation of revolutionary justice after the civil war clashed with the construction of a Soviet national-universal ethos as the necessary cornerstone for a new socialist society. As in most societies ravaged by genocidal violence, the state's goal was to rebuild; and the extreme multinational and multiethnic nature of Soviet cities encouraged the system to forget through celebrating the myth of class collaboration and brotherhood of peoples. The process of erasing Jews from the memory of violence through historical revisionism, which would play such a major role in postwar Eastern Europe, was already part of an unstated policy of the Soviet state in the 1920s and 1930s.[118]

Expunging some of the tainted features from the story for ideological reasons was essential to validate the Soviet myth of brotherhood of peoples based on class and political allegiance to Bolshevism. These dynamics bear some resemblance to the Soviet politics of universalizing the victims of the Holocaust, a process that emerged some twenty years later, following World War II, particularly in the newly occupied Soviet territories of western Belorussia and western Ukraine. There were other analogies between the post-civil war years and the post-World War II years with regard to the treatment of anti-Jewish violence. During the civil war the Soviet state was in general more receptive at setting up investigative commissions and prosecuting the culprits immediately following the Bolsheviks' return to power. But the more time elapsed, the more it was likely for the perpetrators to go unpunished. Similarly, the Soviet state acted much more efficiently and forcefully against those Soviet citizens who collaborated with the Germans in killing Jews toward the end of the war; with time, the public condemnation of anti-Jewish violence and antisemitism was largely abandoned in lieu of the urge to build (or rebuild) communism.[119]

The second analogy lies in the way in which the Soviets responded to the pervasive association between Jews and Bolshevism that emerged with compelling force during the civil war and successfully proliferated through the channels of anti-communist propaganda. They feared that this identification would disprove the whole system. Hence, the need to carefully tone down the initial blatant condemnation of antisemitism. Similarly, following

World War II Soviet authorities did not want to be associated with rescuing Jews. In the newly occupied territories in particular, they hoped to elude the equation of Judeo-Bolshevism and resisted advancing the Jewish cause whatever that might be.

To be sure, the Soviet tendency to overlook the criminality of the perpetrators of specific anti-Jewish violence carried out during the civil war had long-term consequences. The leniency toward pogrom perpetrators impinged on ethnic relations during the interwar period, and eventually played out in the specific context of World War II, perhaps even making collaboration with the Germans and antisemitism in post-1945 Soviet society more likely. As the clashes between Jewish and Ukrainian workers in the factory in Trostianets bear witness, this leniency withheld a culture of violence.

The political life of the Soviet Union echoed through the memory of the pogroms, tracking it, now intensifying it, now weakening it. A hiatus in the conflict of interest in violence memorialization between Jews and the Soviet state coincided with the 1926 Schwarzbard trial, which encouraged Jews to speak up and authorities to listen. In 1929–30, the push toward industrialization made anti-Jewish violence a less central theme. The collectivization of agriculture created a new enemy—the cursive, the allegedly wealthy and politically dangerous peasant—who replaced the counter-revolutionary as the primary object of vilification. During the purges of 1936–38, when Stalin launched a terror campaign and witch-hunt for enemies, saboteurs, spies, and bourgeois nationalists, the memory of anti-Jewish violence resurfaced indirectly, for Jews especially. If Soviet society forgot about the pogroms, the Jews were inspired to remember: the terror unleashed by the Soviet state against alleged Ukrainian nationalists identified the enemies of the system as Petliurites. The mention of Petliura could not but remind Jews of the violence of the civil war.[120] In the midst of the terror, some Jews might have even experienced, once again, the "lesser of two evils" choice: the Soviets were finally taking care of their enemies, the perpetrators of the pogroms.

It would be inaccurate to assume that the extreme violence unleashed during the civil war could be easily forgotten, and that pre-1918 relations could resume as if nothing had ever happened. On the contrary, the violence experienced and perpetrated during the civil war profoundly shaped the Soviet Jewish experience. Despite the state's revisionist efforts, Soviet Jews retained the memory of the pogroms. Some put this memory on hold and returned to it when it mattered. After World War II, for example, they "remembered" the trauma of their experience of the civil war pogroms and "learned" how to write about the Holocaust, recreating the "literature of the ravines" from their civil war experience.

The great Soviet Jewish writer Ilia Ehrenburg, a crucial figure in the *Black Book* project, the extraordinary collection of primary documents about the Holocaust in German-occupied Soviet territories, referred to the pogroms of 1919 in his work. During the civil war, he had witnessed the murder of a family member, in Kiev.[121] Many Yiddish authors who wrote about the civil war pogroms in the 1920s, and suspended the memory of violence during the second half of the 1930s, returned to 1919 to craft their literary responses to the catastrophe.[122] Itsik Kipnis, author of the widely read literary account of the Slovechno pogrom, revisited his experience of anti-Jewish violence in his post-World War II work. When in the fall of 1944 he wrote about Babi Yar (Babyn Yar), the site of the greatest massacre of Ukrainian Jewry in Nazi-occupied Soviet territories, Kipnis conveyed the trauma as follows: "September 29 is a terrible date . . . it is a *yortsayt*. . . . We used to light candles and say *kaddish* on *yortsayt*. But we have yet to build a synagogue, a temple, big enough to contain all the fire, all the lit candles that might illuminate the name of every murdered Jew of such a large city."[123] And although the magnitude of the massacre in Slovechno during the civil war paled in comparison with what the Germans and their collaborators perpetrated in Kiev, in trying to make sense of the vast and harrowing loss experienced during the Holocaust, Kipnis recalled the events of 1919.[124] The Soviets harshly rejected Kipnis postwar writings. They saw his work as a threatening embodiment of Jewish particularistic suffering, which defied the Soviet myth of universal suffering. Predictably they also traced Kipnis's sin back to his 1926 novella, and its narrative of a pogrom as a Jewish *lieu de mémoire*. In the words of one Soviet critic, "Kipnis . . . has not forgotten his . . . *Months and Days*, although many years have passed. And he has learned nothing in all these years of Soviet rule."[125]

4 HOW THE RITUAL MURDER ACCUSATION PERSISTED IN THE SOVIET LANDSCAPE

On March 15, 1937, during Passover, and in the midst of Stalin's Great Terror, Minsk, the capital of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, became the arena of a blood libel accusation. The discovery of a dead body in the city center prompted two Belorussian workers to accuse their Jewish co-workers in the local shoe factory of carrying out the murder for ritual purposes. The allegations provoked a clash between the factory workers. Disparagingly labeling his Jewish co-workers as "Talmudists," one Belorussian worker affirmed that at the time of Passover, because of the need of Christian blood "to bake matzah," all Jews became potential murderers. To confirm his claims, the worker reminded everyone about a similar case of ritual murder that had shaken the Belorussian capital just one year before.[1]

The 1937 blood libel allegation was promptly denounced in the local newspaper, the Yiddish-language *October*. Following Soviet etiquette, the author of the report in the Jewish daily implied a direct connection between communist faith and condemnation of antisemitism when he voiced his distress about the political background of the prime complainant in the Minsk case. The Belorussian worker was not a "backward element," but rather a Communist Party member. The concerned author stated his distress, and linked the occurrence to what was considered a typically tsarist manifestation of antisemitism: "How is it possible, he asked, that such a Black-hundred-like counterrevolutionary libel could proliferate freely in a socialist factory, in the capital city of Minsk, in 1937?"[2]

What is most interesting in this account is the way in which it reports the Jewish and non-Jewish reaction to the allegations. Jewish workers turned to the factory management, protesting the accusations and asking to bring those guilty to justice. They met

Legacy of Blood. Elissa Bemporad, Oxford University Press (2019). © Oxford University Press.
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some resistance from the head of the factory's Communist Party cell, who dismissed the case as insignificant. He refused to convene an all-factory meeting to discuss antisemitism and address the accusation of ritual murder. It took the Jewish workers a few weeks to finally get attention from the higher authorities. The ensuing investigation resulted in the arrest of the workers who made the allegations and in their expulsion from the workers' union. The prosecutor's office of the Belorussian SSR intervened, organized a public trial, and sentenced the offenders to prison terms of a year and a year and a half, respectively. According to the provisions of article 84A of the Soviet constitution, they were guilty of inciting "national hatred."[3]

This case of ritual murder accusation stands out because of its timing. Set off by Moscow's second great trial of January 1937, the Yezhovshchina (or the most severe stage of the Great Purges) was picking up in intensity.[4] In the midst of Stalin's campaign against the "enemies of the people," which resulted in hundreds of thousands of accusations of a great variety of crimes, one might have assumed that residents of the capital of a Soviet Republic would have had other worries and concerns on their minds besides accusing Jews of baking matzah with Christian blood.[5] But the blood libel accusation in the Minsk shoe factory can be seen, in part, also as the outcome of the denunciatory frenzy that enveloped Soviet society from 1936 to 1938. Terror made even the most bizarrely outrageous charge feasible: if a devoted communist could be denounced as a Japanese spy, then the Jews could certainly be accused of the centuries-old false myth of murdering Christians for ritual purposes. The sentencing of the culprits to prison can also be seen as part of the frenzy of the terror. Instead of just being reprimanded, expelled from the Party, or dismissed, they were sent to prison for something they said. Because of the terror, the threshold for arresting people was low. On the other hand, the persistence of the ritual murder accusation in the capital city of a Soviet Republic sheds light on the intrinsic nature of the Soviet system. It becomes an indicator of some failure of the Sovietization process and its ensuing attempt to eradicate antisemitism.

Anti-Religious Propaganda and the Nature of the Soviet System

There were features of the Bolshevik system and its ideology, including the violent push for modernization and the constant social surveillance, that reinforced myths about the Jewish religion and bolstered the rootedness of the blood libel in Soviet society. The social forces and economic tensions

triggered by urbanization and the massive migration of peasants into the cities could serve as the catalyst for the blood allegation. In the cities, the new migrants often competed with Jews for employment, especially in the field of industry. Here, too, they encountered Jews in more prestigious and influential positions as managers, directors, physicians, or Party officials. For example, in a second instance of ritual murder accusation, which occurred in Tula in November 1926,[6] a group of workers from a local factory spread rumors about a Jewish doctor who had recently moved to the area, and accused him of killing Christian boys to use their blood for Jewish rituals. According to the workers' grievance the doctor had been arrested following the discovery of a two-year-old boy's body hanging by his feet in his home's basement. The workers insisted that the thirty Jews implicated in the crime, who had been arrested originally, were instantly released from prison. The chief of police released them. He was Jewish. In other words, a Jew in a position of power allegedly intervened and covered up a Jewish crime.[7] Belief in the accusation was widespread among local workers, Party members and non-members alike, lamented the GPU report.[8] These workers belonged to the social class of newly urbanized peasants who, in conditions of extreme duress and disconcerting Soviet novelty, for the first time met Jews in key positions of authority.

Compared to tsarist Russia, the ritual murder accusation in the Soviet Union was perhaps further bolstered by the growth of peasant culture in urban centers, where Jews had always lived, and where peasants—approximately nineteen million from 1926 to 1939—moved, bringing with them their traditional beliefs, customs, living habits, modes of speech, and social attitudes.[9] The scale of urbanization was so great and its force so sudden that it changed the social face of Soviet cities.[10] The "villagization" of the city and the growth of a rural atmosphere in urban spaces, however, does not necessarily indicate a historical correlation between the peasantry's worldview and the eruption of blood libels. After all, in pre-revolutionary Russia, most cases of blood accusations occurred in medium-to-large cities such as Vilna (1900), Kishinev (1903), or Kiev (1913). What was new about the interwar encounter of peasants and Jews in Soviet cities was the former's lack of exposure to the Party guidelines on antisemitism and its clear-cut condemnation. In other words, while most urban dwellers usually knew what was politically correct to say about Jews—whether they believed in the blood legend or not—newly arrived peasants had no such political filter and assumed that expressing a "barbaric" credence about Jews was not necessarily anti-Soviet. Blaming a Soviet citizen of Jewish nationality of harboring "bourgeois nationalism" or of behaving like a capitalist private entrepreneur—in many cases, expressions

of antisemitism in disguise—was acceptable and even reasonable; accusing that same person of committing ritual murder was not.

To voice their resistance to the new system—which in their eyes was "dominated" by Jews—rather than openly criticize the Soviet state, some would resort to the more traditional and familiar accusation of ritual murder. The blood libel accusation could thus serve as a passive form of resistance to the Soviet system, as a way to re-forge a safe community that excluded the Soviet Jew. It became a channel through which recently urbanized peasants could vent their ethnic and class resentments, their paranoia over the unknown, their disapproval of what changed under the Soviets. The blood libel expressed the anxiety and fear about new life conditions in the city, where, for many, the "rise of the Jew,"[11] his relative socioeconomic and political success, and enhanced visibility; the brutality of the new system; and the apprehension over the end of established patterns of life intertwined and coalesced.

Intersections of Blood: Circumcision, Kosher Slaughter, and Ritual Murder

There was a second factor that unintentionally contributed to the persistence of the blood libel, and which also lay at the heart of the Soviet social engineering project. Intense and systematic anti-religious propaganda, in particular the attacks on two Jewish rituals, circumcision and kosher butchering, created an unintended synergy between antisemitism and the Soviet condemnation of religion. For the first time on the territory of the former Russian empire, circumcision and kosher slaughter—both of which involved blood—became illicit rituals, publicly and systematically confronted and rejected by the state.[12] In the attempt to secularize and reform the behavior of its citizens, the new political system that emerged following the Bolshevik rise to power denounced as anti-modern both circumcision (which was seen as an unsanitary form of child mutilation) and kosher butchering (which was seen as an obstacle to the rationality of production in the meat sector).[13] In an early decree, dated April 28, 1920, the Soviet authorities in charge of food supplies in Poltava outlawed kosher slaughtering, forbidding the Jewish method of killing the animals "by cutting their throat."[14] A number of Jews who disregarded the decree were arrested after the police discovered kosher meat being sold at their apartment. The ban was temporary: the local Jewish community petitioned Soviet authorities, who rescinded the decree.[15] But the attack on kosher slaughtering persisted throughout the interwar period, across the Soviet Union.

The fact that a sizeable constituency of Soviet Jews, with varying levels of religious observance and political inclination, abided by the rituals of circumcision and kosher meat consumption made things more complicated. In 1928 a worker who attended a propaganda workshop on antisemitism complained that "Jews hold on to their specific beliefs and customs, especially circumcision, which makes them particularly repulsive."[16] In early 1929, a police investigation in Uladovka, in the Vinnitsa region, revealed that workers and personnel in a local factory restricted the number of Jewish employees. They ascertained the Jewish identity of the workers by inspecting whether they had been circumcised or not.[17]

In order to discredit religion, Soviet propaganda typically depicted religious rituals as barbarian.[18] Perhaps more than other practices and rituals, circumcision was an easy target for this kind of criticism. An anti-religious pamphlet that appeared in 1923 in Moscow, which was largely based on late-nineteenth-century criticism of circumcision among Jews and Muslims, offered a detailed description of the barbarian practice among the "savage" peoples and tribes of Australia and South America.[19] While the idea of Jews using blood during Passover had independent sources, the public discussion of these "barbarian" practices, which in the minds of non-Jews violated an accepted moral code, indirectly reinforced the idea of Jewish blood rituals and connected real religious practices to the mythical crime of blood libel.[20] Non-Jews had some knowledge of the practices of circumcision and kosher slaughtering, which in their collective imagination provided evidence of a Jewish propensity for violence and cruelty.

The intersection between real Jewish rituals and alleged ones was not new, of course. One only needs to look back to ninth-century Europe and remember the words of Archbishop Agobard of Lyon who, to reveal the arrogance of the Jews toward the local Christian community, fiercely condemned real (kosher slaughtering) and imagined Jewish blood rituals. Through the channels of the Soviet propaganda machine, undergoing constant attack and criticism, the rituals appeared as "barbaric," "hideous," and "inhumane," while the circumcisers and kosher butchers, adept in blood rituals, were depicted as prone to evil practices, and sometimes even sexually deviant. The case of a circumcision that resulted in the newborn's accidental death in Minsk was covered in the local and national press. The circumciser was brought to court, found guilty of performing an "unnecessary surgical treatment," sentenced to prison, and publicly branded as the "slaughterer of chicken and children." (It was not uncommon for a circumciser to be adept in the ritual of kosher butchering as well.)[21] In 1931, in the city of Leninsk, at a public trial of a *mohel*

held at a local factory, the forensic doctor announced to the workers in the audience that, after having dissected the corpses of Jewish children, he had documented multiple cases of death due to circumcision.[22]

Like theater, radio also became an essential device to sway the minds and hearts of Soviet citizens. Soviet radio broadcast courses and lectures in anti-religious propaganda.[23] In the late 1920s, large anti-religious marches took over the main streets of cities, towns, and villages.[24] Dissemination of hideous images through the press fostered the identification of male religious functionaries—and perhaps by extension of Jewish men in general—with the evil "other," adept in blood rituals. Caricatures of male religious functionaries engaging in ritual slaughter and circumcision appeared in *The Godless at the Workplace*, the Russian-language monthly publication of the League of Militant Atheists, which reached a circulation of 200,000. Intended to be a popular paper, with short articles that could be read in minutes, and graphic illustrations that provided a message at a glance, the publication was distributed in the provinces and throughout the countryside as well. Just as in early modern Europe, where mass print purposely spread information about old and new blood libels, in the Soviet case the media upheld the memory of the blood libel inadvertently. *The Godless at the Workplace* published essays condemning Christianity as much as it did Judaism. But the latter articles could foster antisemitism among non-Jewish readers. And the dissemination of images of Jewish rituals could elicit the memory of ritual murder among an audience fascinated with Jewish deviance.[25]

Photos and graphic works displayed throughout the interwar period at the Museum of the History of Religion of the Academy of Science SSR (MIR) in Leningrad, at the Central Antireligious Museum in Moscow, and which reached other Soviet cities through the museums' traveling exhibitions, conveyed and confirmed the negative association with Jewish rituals. In Leningrad, a drawing by the well-known Russian Jewish artist Solomon Iudovin entitled "The Ritual Slaughterer" was put on display in 1930 at the *Antireligious Exhibition of the Academy of Science of the USSR,* which opened that year at the Winter Palace.[26] The drawing itself did not reveal any caricature. But in the context of the anti-religious attacks on Judaism, it took on negative undertones. Another drawing exhibited in Moscow depicted a group of religious Jews as villains, with one of them ominously holding the knife to perform a circumcision.[27] It is noteworthy that criticism was directed primarily at the Jewish "rituals of blood," rather than at the similar rituals of circumcision and animal slaughtering sanctioned by Islam. So that while the painting's label clearly stated that "circumcision among Jews and Muslims

represents one of the many savage rituals sustained in contemporary times," it depicted only Jews engaging in the ritual.[28]

The 1937 anti-religious brochure entitled *On Baptism and Circumcision* included one chapter on baptism and two on circumcision. Despite the difference in numbers (3.1 million Soviet Jews, versus the approximately 40 million Muslims, largely concentrated in Soviet Central Asia), the brochure condemned the Jewish ritual in particular.[29] It provided a disturbingly graphic depiction of the Jewish circumciser only (no specifically Muslim practice of circumcision was described), as he held the knife in his hand and sucked the blood from the child, performing *metsitsa bi-peh* (the sucking with the mouth), which even then was a largely obsolete custom no longer in use.[30] In this supposedly scientific attack on the practice of circumcision, the circumciser was reminiscent of the wickedly deviant and blood-stained *mohel* Naftula in Isaac Babel's brilliant satire of Jewish religious life during the NEP years.[31] Ironically, then, the most scientific and detailed elucidation of Jewish rituals in Soviet literature could easily prompt suspicion and condemnation in a reader not well versed in Jewish religious practice. Explaining the absurdity of the blood libel by mentioning the prohibition in Judaism to consume blood, connecting it in turn to the laws prescribing the slaughter of animals and fowl, left the reader with the image of blood and Jews adept in using sharp instruments, and consequently as potential criminals: "[one has to] drain all the blood from the organism of the killed animal or from the slaughtered fowl, until the very last drop."[32] Soviet anti-Judaism could easily, inadvertently, generate antisemitism, especially when anti-religious propaganda was spread in Russian, Ukrainian, or Belorussian, and read or seen by non-Jews. (Anti-religious propaganda in Yiddish did not have such consequences.)[33]

In some instances, even supposedly true believers in communism who were involved in the campaign against religion accepted the existence of ritual murder as a fact. In the summer of 1929, calling for a purge on the anti-religious front and warning against the lack of political integrity of some of the "godless" Komsomol and Party members, Emilian Yaroslavski lashed out at an activist. The head of the Central Committee of the Union of Militant Atheists was enraged after discovering that during the campaigns against Easter and Passover held in the city of Berdichev (Berdychiv), the activist delivered his anti-religious lecture and "tried to prove that Jews really use Christian blood for Passover."[34] He presented ritual murder as a fact. In other words, the activist, who was supposed to enlighten the backward religious masses actually believed that Jews needed Christian blood for ritual purposes.



An illustration in a 1925 issue of the anti-religious publication *The Godless at the Workplace* depicts a *shohet*, or ritual slaughterer, who is dressed in traditional Jewish garb. Blood covers his knife and drips from the fowl he is slaughtering for two waiting women. The illustration is typical of the publication's campaign against Judaism.

For this very reason, he encouraged respectable Soviet citizens to reject both Passover and Easter.[35]

The intersection between the two real Jewish blood rituals (circumcision and kosher slaughtering) and the alleged one (ritual murder) appears in a 1929 discussion on kosher meat production in the Soviet context. In Kremenchug, in central Ukraine, a Soviet government official cautioned against forbidding kosher butchering in communist society. Such a prohibition, he warned, would inflate and further promote the blood libel superstition. The official feared that banning kosher butchering would bring the Jewish ritual slaughterer to perform his function secretly, sometimes under the suspicious non-Jewish eye. This would reinforce notions of "barbaric," anti-modern, secret Jewish ritual deeds.[36]



The illustration entitled "The Holy Trust" depicts several ritual slaughterers chasing after a fellow slaughterer with their knives drawn to attack him. They are chasing him because he lowered the price of his services. As part of the campaign against Judaism, which targeted the practice of ritual slaughtering, the illustration was included in the anti-religious publication *The Godless at the Workplace*, in 1926.

Gendered Victims and Perpetrators

In the canonic narrative of this particular anti-Jewish accusation, which goes back to the Middle Ages, it is usually children—mostly but not exclusively boys—who become the victims of the Jewish ritual murder: Jews not only follow the alleged injunction from the Talmud that instructed them to kill Christians and consume their blood for their ceremonies, mainly Passover, but symbolically reenact the killing of Christ, in a child sacrifice modeled on the crucifixion of Jesus. Ordinarily, therefore, it is the young boy who is snatched, tortured, and murdered. But this popularly espoused rendition of the ritual murder accusation underwent specific permutations in modern times, when the public accusation against Jews for the crime of ritual murder proliferated.[37]

What is new in the modern accounts of ritual murder? Compared to Imperial Russia, one of the novelties that surfaced in interwar Soviet society

concerned the victim's gender identity. The alleged victim of the Jewish predator—who was always a Jewish man—became more often than not a woman, generally an adolescent girl or a young woman from a lower social class. To be sure, blood libel accounts featuring a Jewish male predator and a non-Jewish female victim in lieu of the child had occurred in late Imperial Russia as well. In 1900, in Vilna, for example, on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Purim, the Jewish barber David Blondes was accused of planning to murder and draw the blood from his Polish housemaid for ritual purposes.[38] While the child-victim theme in the ritual murder scheme never disappeared in Soviet society, the young non-Jewish woman became the most common target in the blood accusation.

In the context of intense urbanization, and the ongoing challenge to pre-revolutionary traditional economic roles, the strain in social dynamics between ethnic groups often resulted in the apparent threat that Jewish men posed to non-Jewish women. For many, the brutality of the new system, the unease over the end of familiar patterns of life, and the enhanced visibility of Jews in society, became closely intertwined. The perceived threat of male Jews to Belorussian or Ukrainian women mirrored the way in which the Soviet system defied the sense of a cohesive ethnic identity that existed before the revolution, with approximately distinct boundaries. The Bolsheviks strove to eradicate pre-revolutionary traditions, impose secularism and universalism, and encourage intermarriage. The rates of intermarriage, the celebrated outcome of the "brotherhood of nations" utopia, grew exponentially after 1917. In promoting this utopia, the Bolshevik system reshaped the contours of intimacy of the ethnic group, making them more ambiguous, and triggering new anxieties. In turn, the perceived loss of supervision and control over the young women of one specific ethnic group, experienced by the parents and other members of that same group, validated these anxieties. After all, young women were more likely than children to cross into private or public spaces viewed as dangerous and unsafe, thereby evading parental supervision. These anxieties had emerged already in nineteenth-century Hungary (Tiszaeszlar, 1882–83), in the Prussian Rhineland (Xanten, 1891–92), and in Austrian Bohemia (Polna, 1899), and they became common in the territories of the former Russian empire.[39]

The response of the Ukrainian residents of Kaniev to the sudden disappearance of a young woman during the Passover of 1926 captures these dynamic forces. The male residents attempted to reclaim control over their "vulnerable and helpless" women. They approached other Ukrainian girls employed in nearby Jewish homes as housemaids and warned them about the looming

danger of the Passover ritual murder practices. By doing so, Ukrainian men attempted to rescue the young domestic servants, who were single and thus perceived as more vulnerable, from the dangerous spaces allegedly created by the Jewish masters. Their actions also represented the attempt to reaffirm their masculinity, wounded in the changes brought by the Revolution.

Similar forces were at work in May 1926, in the area of the Chernitskii village, in the Vitebsk region of Belorussia.[40] Here, the new economic and geographic displacement caused by Soviet policies triggered the emotional response of the blood allegation against Jews. Specifically, the Jewish settlement on land promoted by the state to solve the chronic problem of a growing number of Jewish disenfranchised citizens, elicited the complaints and rage of local peasants. They attempted to pressure the new Jewish settlers into leaving the land. On May 29, headed by the village council's chairman, dozens of peasants from the surrounding villages approached the nearby settlement of Zacherniia, and demanded that the Jews give back the body of the young woman who had recently gone missing. Jews had likely kidnapped and killed the young woman. When the accused denied the charges, the peasants attempted to break into the settlement and search the land for "their" woman's body. The police eventually stopped them.[41]

That same year, in Dubossary, in the Kherson province of Ukraine, the old legend about Jews using Christian blood to bake matzah reemerged. Rumors about a Jew who allegedly abducted a woman and killed her by inserting nails through her body, stirred up the residents in the nearby villages. The local peasants, stated the police report, spoke about the rumors as if they were real facts. They also argued, continued the report, that more than thirty Jews had been arrested in connection with the ritual murder. But the chief of police, one Brodskii (who was Jewish), released them immediately.[42] Once again, Jews in positions of power supposedly exercised their authority to protect other Jews who allegedly carried out a Jewish crime. This time, however, they murdered a non-Jewish woman in lieu of a Christian boy.

Jews were often included in the iconography of the nation under attack heralded across early-twentieth-century Europe by different conservative and right-wing groups. In Hungary, Romania, Germany, and France, for example, a recurrent image of a Jewish interloper who tore at the heart of the nation's fabric, challenging its wholeness, and threatening its existence, circulated through newspapers, novels, and the arts.[43] The dangerous Jewish entity was often represented along gendered lines: if the force shattering the nation took on the face of a Jewish male, the victim-nation appeared as a woman. This trope turned out to be fairly common in late-Imperial Russia as well. In



An eight-by-fourteen foot painting depicts the Jewish ritual murder of a young Christian woman. A dozen Jewish men, wearing traditional religious garb, hold down and torture the naked woman. The painting, which probably illustrated the 1882 Tiszaeszlar blood libel, when the Jews of the Hungarian town of Tiszaeszlar were accused of ritually murdering a fourteen-year-old Christian girl, was commissioned by a Russian aristocrat for his personal art collection around 1900. *Courtesy of Jeffrey Taylor*.



In this detail of the painting, Jewish men suck the blood of their victim with a vampire-like gaze and hold nails to torture the young woman. Blood drips from the young woman's body and stains the clothes and hands of the perpetrators. The detail highlights the monstrosity of the ritual murder and the brutality of the Jews. *Courtesy of Jeffrey Taylor*.

a painting commissioned by a Russian aristocrat in 1898, publicly shown in St. Petersburg in 1914, and recently discovered in London,[44] the anxiety of the Russian nation and the "Slavic people" materialized through the ritual murder of a young woman. In the massive painting, a group of dreadful Jewish "vampires" and rabbis carry out the ritual by drawing the young woman's blood with a number of sharp instruments, including their teeth.[45] The blood libel narrative is further modernized by the addition of an obviously sexual subtext. The naked prey is not only murdered through torture and the drawing out of the blood. She also appears as the potential victim of rape, as ritual murder becomes sexual murder. In the different Soviet context, the sudden and artificial bonds of a "brotherhood of peoples," consisting of intermarriage and disruption of traditional hierarchies and mores, which the state promoted and forced upon its citizens, unleashed similar fears over the integrity of the ethnic group.

The traditional dominance of men in Jewish religious life led to a predominance of male images in Soviet propaganda against Judaism. This image of religious Jewish men, with beards, *peyes*, and traditional black garbs, underwent a specific metamorphosis in Soviet society. If in the pre-revolutionary antisemitic image, religious Jewish men appeared weak, effeminate, soft, and cowardly devious, in the Soviet version they emerged as monsters who kill, slaughter, and maim. As may be expected, this image also derived from the violent nature of Bolshevik ideology, in which the "enemy" came across as inherently vicious, sadistic, and prone to violence. When Jewish women were depicted in Soviet anti-religious propaganda they appeared as passive victims of the religious monstrosity of men; their backwardness and ignorance made them vulnerable. Jewish women needed to be educated, emancipated, but not feared or fought. But things could change, and the emergence of the "New Soviet Jewish Woman" occasionally disrupted the gendered nature of antisemitism.

Jewish Female Predators

With the appearance of a secular, literate, and successful Jewish woman, an all too frequent phenomenon in Soviet cities, the gendered view of antisemitism expanded to include members of the "weaker sex" as well. In the modern (and premodern) blood libel account, the Jewish male always carried out ritual murder. But in the Soviet context, for the first time, Jewish women became the alleged "willing participants" in, and the direct agents of, the ritual murder, in spite of their gender. Calls for violence targeting young Jewish women were not entirely unusual in Soviet society. The appointment of a Jewish woman

to a position of authority and responsibility, for example, could trigger distrust and hostility. The author of a complaint intercepted by the Soviet secret police in the Ukrainian countryside angrily stated that "we must force the *zhidovka* out of here; it is not fair that the state is sending us a Jewess . . . as a spy."[46] The anxiety over Jews who supposedly infiltrated spaces and organizations in order to "listen to our conversations and turn us over to the police and GPU agents" could intensify because of the gender identity of the alleged enemy. It was now Jewish women who "spy on us and betray us": this reality represented a threat to the masculinity of the male members of the majority group and underscored their insecurity in the new socioeconomic and political reality of Soviet life.[47]

In April 1929, in the city of Poltava, Vasily Shikula, a member of the local city council, accused his neighbor Sarah Lichnitskaia, a single Jewish woman, of complicity in ritual murder schemes: "You think I don't know that you steal Russian-Orthodox children and kill them for your *zhidovskaia matzah*, your Jewish matzah?" The Jewish woman turned at once to the local authorities and filed a complaint against Shikula, who was brought to court. But the judge, a Communist Party member, dismissed the case and released the council member. The Jewish woman did not give in and filed a civil suit against the city council member for his blood libel comments.

A second trial was eventually convened. During the trial, the council member openly accused Lichnitskaia in court of planning to kidnap, murder, and use the blood of his daughter to bake Passover matzah. He then proceeded to substantiate his claims, stating that "ritual murder was nothing new among Jews and that only recently the Jews of Kharkov had killed Christian children to obtain their blood for Passover."[48] Once again, the judge failed to punish the council member and ignored the accusation of ritual murder, which was not mentioned in the final verdict. In her resolve to assert her rights as a Soviet citizen, and her effort to see antisemitism publicly condemned and punished, Lichnitskaia turned now to *Pravda*, the central newspaper of the Communist Party and the main press organ in the Soviet Union.[49] We can assume that Lichnitskaia occupied a fairly prominent position in society, as she knew quite well how to navigate the bureaucratic and legal systems and the press, claim her rights, and fight against what she perceived as wrong. Possibly because of her position in society and her assertiveness, a single Jewish woman became "the Jewish male predator," but of children, not young maidens.[50]

A second blood libel account that features a Jewish woman in the unusual role of the Jewish murderer occurred in the midst of World War II, when the collision between popular antisemitism and the Bolsheviks' attempt to tame

antisemitic manifestations began to wane, and a new synergy between popular antisemitism and official antisemitism began to surface. During Passover of 1943, Rachel Tverski, a young Jewish woman from Ukraine, who had been evacuated to the Jalal-Abad region of southwestern Kirghizia, in Central Asia, experienced the blood libel accusation. There she worked as a kindergarten director. When a Russian child who attended her kindergarten went missing one morning, the child's mother accused Tverski of kidnapping and killing him for ritual purposes. Encouraged by the distressed mother, who called to the "Russian people to help me find my son Kolia," a group of local residents, including two policemen, urged Tverski to fetch the boy. In doing so they also mentioned the names of cities and villages where they knew "for a fact" that Jews had carried out similar ritual crimes for their Passover bread. In other words, the lore of previous blood libel legends was used to confirm the authenticity of this specific case of ritual murder.[51] The accuser relied on an audience that shared an awareness of centuries-old tales about the blood libel, which were deeply rooted in the myth of Jewish collective responsibility. As the rumors about plans for ritual murder spread through the local marketplace, few children showed up for kindergarten in the following days.[52]

After the boy was found and the crowd had dispersed, Tverski kept to the common Jewish practice of the interwar period and turned immediately to the regional prosecutor, pleading for justice and soliciting a punishment for the slanderers. But the prosecutor brushed aside the charges, deviating from the authorities' customary response to complaints of antisemitism. He reminded Tverski of the primacy of the war effort, against which "trivial matters" such as blood libels vanished, especially, as he added, when the child's father was a prominent military official. The case against Rachel Tverski reveals the objective exigencies of war, which made it difficult, if not impractical, to pursue similar charges. It also palpably reflects the beginning of a new stage in Soviet attitudes toward antisemitism. In fact, not only were the culprits not convicted, but Tverski was dismissed from her position of kindergarten director two days after the incident.[53]

The Bolshevik State and Grass-Roots Antisemitism

Despite the Soviets' official position, post-1917 life was not without antisemitism—even though many Jews supported the Bolshevik regime because of that hope. Rumors, images, and language could confirm the perception of ritual murder as a real and ordinary crime even in Soviet society. The alleged truth and normality of the crime clashed with the state's

condemnation of antisemitism, and the notion of ritual murder as false and extraordinary. Enforcing its control over society, the state denounced the blood libels, put up commissions to investigate them, and conducted trials against the accusers. But the allegation survived.

Whether they moved to the cities as migrant workers or remained in the countryside to toil the land, many Soviet citizens resorted to antisemitism as a defense strategy against the Bolshevik system. In the face of the strains of Sovietization, Jewish empowerment in the city, or the Jews' appearance in the countryside in the form of settlement on land, troubled many Soviet citizens. If both phenomena appeared as state-sponsored, then antisemitism (and the blood allegation) could reaffirm the cohesiveness of the group in opposition to Soviet reality. Alongside economic and social dislocation, Sovietization called into question traditional religious and national categories. Under conditions of stress, therefore, Soviet citizens looked for commonalities and repudiated differences in a quest to counter their sense of powerlessness, insecurity, and defeat, emboldened by what was perceived as the state's legitimization of their inferiority in opposition to Jewish superiority. These same forces were at work when thousands of Jews fled Ukraine and resettled to Central Asia during World War II. The novel presence of Jews, especially when they gained unexpected and unfamiliar leadership positions in a specific social context, such as the one of dislocation that characterized the experience of evacuation for both Jews and Russians, could trigger—as in the case of a Jewish woman appointed director of a kindergarten—a wave of anti-Jewish feeling.

A comparison with the blood libel accusation in interwar Poland seems a useful reminder of similarities and differences with the Soviet case. Soviet anti-religious propaganda grew out of the state's biopolitical project, and as such it aimed at controlling the body, the health, and the mind of Soviet citizens. Like the Soviet Union, neighboring Poland also engaged in surveillance, supervising and hence denouncing as anti-modern both circumcision and kosher butchering. As in the Bolshevik system, the emergence of a modern (and Catholic) state in Poland deemed certain Jewish religious rituals as obsolete and barbaric, which in turn promoted a connection between the inhumane ritual of kosher slaughter and ritual murder. This argument found support among sectors of the Polish political and religious elites, especially in the second part of the 1930s. In some cases the Polish Catholic press created a triangular connection between Jews, communism, and the blood libel. In one of his publications, Monsignor Stanislaw Trzeciak argued that Jewish communists (in the Soviet Union) tended to arrest bishops and other prominent religious leaders primarily at the time of Passover, for their "communist

ritual murder." In March 1923, for example, Jewish communists arrested a group of Catholic religious leaders, including one archbishop and fourteen priests, and they succeeded, argued Trzeciak, in their ritual scheme. They carried out the death sentence on the eve of Passover.[54]

Soviet Jews were aware that blood libel accusations occurred in neighboring Poland, and that there Jews possibly faced arrest, trial, and prison time. They also knew that in the USSR only accusers who fabricated allegations faced punishment. The Kharkov Yiddish newspaper *Der Shtern* mentioned the case of a blood libel in Warsaw, in 1927, involving a woman who turned to the police and accused the Jewish shopkeeper who lived in the same building of abducting her daughter, taking her to the basement, and drawing her blood to bake matzah. The Soviet press report ridiculed the event, and protested the arrest of the old man (who was seventy), as the crowd gathered around his home and attempted to attack his wife and children.[55] In 1937, the Minsk Yiddish newspaper informed its readers about a blood libel that occurred in a shtetl in Poland: a Jewish couple was accused of killing a Polish girl to use her blood to bake matzah for Passover. According to the report, the couple was arrested and found guilty. Only ten days later, the same Minsk Yiddish newspaper recounted the blood libel that erupted in the Belorussian capital. Those who read about the blood libel in Poland, and about the blood libel in Soviet Belorussia, could not avoid noticing the different reaction to the false accusation on the part of the Polish legal system on the one hand, and the Soviet legal system on the other. They perhaps might even have felt that the Soviet state was at the time alone in Europe in considering antisemitism a crime.

Despite the grand vision of a new and modern society that would emerge from the corruption of tsarist Russia, and would be built at all costs, with the unremitting passion and the brutality of its leaders, the Soviet Union remained a heavily traditional society, linked to the past. Unlike some of the instances of blood libels that occurred elsewhere in Europe, where Jews were accused of drawing blood from their non-Jewish neighbors without any ritual explanation, in the interwar Soviet Union most accusations were set within the framework of Passover and the production of matzah.[56]

But Soviet society was also rapidly changing and disrupting social and family patterns. This explains why the victims of the blood accusation were often young women. For example, the idea of a daughter being sexually active might have been too foreboding for parents. Imagining ritual murder was a way to ward off that daunting possibility, as in the case of Kaniev, where the daughter of the accuser was secretly pregnant, and sought an abortion at the nearby hospital behind her parents' back. While culturally and historically

rooted, the gendered nature of antisemitism also persisted—in a system that rejected antisemitism—as a consequence of the social engineering project promoted by the Bolsheviks, which included, among other things, a belligerent attack on Judaism and its contested "blood rituals." Finally, this was also a society that allowed Jewish women to advance.

Not unlike the Soviet Union, a growing number of blood allegations in Poland contemplated the non-Jewish female as the preferred victim of the Jewish male predator. This happened, for example, in September 1927, when Isaac Rubinstein, member of the Polish Senate and future chief rabbi of the city of Wilno, was accused of attempted ritual murder by the twenty-six-year-old woman who worked as a housemaid in his home.[57] At the same time, however, the Polish context does not reveal any public accusation against Jewish women for ritual murder. More than in Poland, Jewish women in the Soviet Union experienced changing standards of living, greater occupational mobility, and professionalization, especially when compared to their non-Jewish counterparts. This process of empowerment for Jewish women, albeit far from being ideal, thorough, and complete, still stood out in the Soviet context, and irked non-Jewish men and women alike. If modern antisemitism is indeed a post-emancipatory phenomenon generally directed against emancipated Jewry[58]—then the emergence of the Jewish woman as the new predator might not be at all surprising. The empowerment of the "New Soviet Jewish Woman" became a dangerous threat to the status quo. The blood libel narrative was thus deployed to punish the accomplished Jewish women for their uppity ways, for their sudden penetration into public life, and their involvement in politics.[59]

Gender allows us to investigate the evolution of the blood libel in modern times. As young people gained more geographic and economic mobility, and sexual mores loosened, anxieties surged. The most traditional and tight-knit communities tried to reassert control over "their" young women who now increasingly worked outside the home, as the unsupervised Ukrainian women employed by Jews. These communities did so by designating young women, rather than children, the traditional targets of the bloodthirsty Jews, as the victims of ritual murder. Young women were depicted as vulnerable and therefore needing the ties of family and community that Soviet society progressively dissolved.

For analogous reasons, Jewish women—and not the Jewish men traditionally held responsible for the crime—could now be identified as the agents of ritual murder. The Soviet regime had, at least to a certain extent, emancipated women. These newly powerful females were seen as capable of ruthless and

heinous acts. Under these circumstances, a female Jewish teacher and a political activist became particularly choice targets. The ritual murder narrative was thus re-conceptualized and deployed to cope with Soviet modernization and secularization. Similarly, and in nexus with the traditional blood libel narrative, World War II and the Cold War years would produce accusations against Jews of non-ritualistic cannibalism and political murder. The war of annihilation conducted by the Germans on Soviet soil, which also deployed the blood libel theme in its propaganda, helped preserve and renew the blood legend in the postwar years, during the 1940s and 1950s. But it was also the nature of the Soviet system, and its brutality during the interwar period, which inadvertently kept alive, fomented, and revived the blood libel through a gamut of morphed conspiracy theories during and after World War II.

5 MYTH AND REALITY

THE "ABSENCE" OF THE POGROM IN THE LANDS OF THE SOVIETS

According to one visitor, what made the Jewish museum Mendele Mocher Seforim in downtown Odessa unique was the exhibit room on pogroms.[1] Conceived as a memorial to the culture and everyday life of Ukrainian Jewry, the museum put on display the history of pre-revolutionary pogroms. The exhibit included paintings depicting anti-Jewish violence; images of the 1871 pogrom in Odessa; sketches for the contest launched by the Odessa Jewish community to build a monument in memory of the victims of the 1905 pogrom; and some rare photographs of the 1905 pogrom, which were donated to the museum by Jewish revolutionaries.[2] The museum also organized ethnographic expeditions through the shtetls around Kiev, and elsewhere in the regions of Podolia and Volhynia, to collect material evidence on the history of the pogroms.[3] The pogrom exhibit room's storyline reminded visitors that tsarist authorities had never granted permission to erect the monument to the victims of the 1905 pogrom, nor had they allowed the pogrom art to be displayed in pre-revolutionary Odessa. It also reminded them that as a Soviet institution the museum commemorated the violence of 1881 and 1905 as evidence of the brutality of autocracy, and of the Bolshevik victory over anti-Jewish violence.

The virtual disappearance of outbreaks of mass violence targeting Jews represented one of the most notable ruptures in manifestations of antisemitism from tsarist to Soviet times. After the civil war, under Soviet rule, public attacks and displays of violence against Jews receded. And the pogroms—or rather the absence thereof—became the founding myth of Soviet Jewry. In a way, the Bolsheviks had rescued Jews from the pogroms. They unfettered them from an evil regime and its stifling specter of anti-Jewish violence. This

Legacy of Blood. Elissa Bemporad, Oxford University Press (2019). © Oxford University Press.
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shared myth endured well into the late 1930s and beyond. Stalin himself spelled out the Soviet Jewish myth in the postwar period: it happened in the late 1940s, in the wake of widespread popular and state-sponsored antisemitism, when two distinguished Jewish writers approached him to complain about the mounting discrimination against Jews. Annoyed, Stalin retorted, "Are there any pogroms?" Then he replied to his own question, urging them to stop the nagging: "No, there are no pogroms, so just be content [and don't complain]."[4] As long as there were no pogroms, there was no antisemitism.

More than a decade earlier, in 1935, Simon Dimanshtein triumphantly celebrated the Soviet Jewish myth. A prominent political and literary figure who served in different key positions, including those of Jewish commissar of the Commissariat of Nationality Affairs, deputy head of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee Secretariat of the Communist Party, head of the nationalities sector of the Central Committee, director of the Institute of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee, chair of OZET, and editor of its publication *Tribuna*, Dimanshtein proudly chronicled the main stages of the Soviet Jewish story. Grounded in the Bolsheviks' commitment to fight against anti-Jewish discrimination, Lenin's decree on antisemitism (which Dimanshtein himself had written and Lenin edited), first averred the myth. The early trials against tsarist bureaucrats, and, of course, the absence of pogroms confirmed it.[5] Dimanshtein celebrated Soviet Jewish patriotism most starkly and passionately when he wrote:

> One of the most glaring revelations of the zoological antisemitic politics of Russian tsarism were the bloody Jewish pogroms organized to divert the suffering of the masses against the Jews . . . they led to the death of tens of thousands of Jews. . . . [T]he Bolshevik Party always resisted the pogrom agitation, mobilizing the proletarian masses to wage a war against the pogroms. . . . During the [World] War the tsarist legacy persisted with the Whites who accused Jews of treachery and expelled them *en masse*. Jewish women suffered particularly during these military pogroms. Not one military pogrom took place without the mass rape of women–young, old, ten and twelve-year-old girls, the ill and the pregnant.[6]

The Soviet state put an end to the violence.

This mythical narrative echoed through the pages of the Soviet Yiddish press of the second half of the 1930s. The papers made reference, for example, to the Jewish children who had witnessed their parents' murder during the

pogroms carried out by the Polish army in 1921, at the time of the occupation of Belorussia: they had been rescued by the Soviet state. The state had taken care of them and helped them pursue the Soviet path to success, supporting their education and turning them into engineers, artists, construction workers, Red Army commanders, and students in the Leningrad conservatory.[7] The existence and the open discussion of violence against Jews in "fascist" Europe further reinforced the myth of a state that rescued the Jewish minority from violence. By condemning the violence that occurred elsewhere, the Soviet press promoted Soviet Jewish patriotism. Pogroms belonged exclusively outside the borders of the Soviet Union. They belonged in Poland, in Romania, in Lithuania.[8]

As a reminder of the threat posed by "fascist" Poland, where pogromists went unpunished, the Yiddish press recorded the words of an elderly Jewish woman who spoke publicly about the pogroms she experienced under the tsar and during the Polish-Soviet war.[9] To mark the sixteenth anniversary of the liberation of Belorussia from the White troops and the Polish army, the Yiddish press reissued the précis of the Bobruisk investigative commission. It included a detailed account of the pogrom and the extensive rape of Jewish women perpetrated by the Bolsheviks' enemies.[10] The review of Isaac Babel's *Gedali*, a short story about the intrinsic brutality of the Revolution, reassured its audience that anti-Jewish violence had no place in the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks had interrupted the perpetual cycle of anti-Jewish pogroms: "[I]f you dream about your great-grandfather who was hanged by Khmelnytsky, or you dream of your grandfather who was burned by Gonta, or of your father drowned by Petliura, or of your bride raped by Denikin, gather all your strength and dismiss the past. Never, never will this happen again in your life."[11] This was the refrain of the Soviet Jewish myth.

The Social Life of the "Pogrom"

The term "pogrom" did not vanish under the Soviets. It lingered in the context of the growing dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic conditions at the end of the NEP years and the beginning of the first Five-Year Plan. Those Soviet citizens who feared the alliance between the state and the Jews—who, in the words of one citizen, had "taken over all the bread and all the power"—employed the term "pogrom" to express resentment for Jewish visibility and political agency. They used "pogrom" to refer to a long-established form of violence against Jews as members of an ethnoreligious, class, or political enemy group who allegedly posed a threat to the well-being and safety of the majority

group. In their criticism of the Soviet system, some introduced the term to cope with the mounting competition on the job market, or to give voice to the frustrated masculinity of Ukrainian and Belorussian peasants who were often displaced from their traditional patriarchal roles in the new society.[12]

The Ukrainian countryside, in particular, faced immense challenges in the 1920s and early 1930s. Impoverished and ravished by the war, depleted by the poor harvest and a deadly famine, it witnessed a surge in criminal banditry and an escalation in cases of looting and murder.[13] The utter breakdown of the countryside made hostility against the Jews more common.[14] In the words of the accountant of the Red Star mill in the Kupyansk district of Kharkov, "Jews are everywhere and everywhere they occupy the highest ranks of power . . . and everywhere they receive good employment."[15] A water factory worker in the Odessa district echoed this position: "While Jews emancipated themselves during the October Revolution, they enslaved Russians. The central government is made up exclusively of Jews with Russian surnames." In the Kharkov district one worker voiced his distress that "so many Jews have entered our factory, . . . it will soon become a Jewish factory."[16] Even the emergence in early 1926 of the United Opposition in the Bolshevik Party was framed through the lenses of fearsome Jewish power. If one report from Kharkov mentioned that the opposition was an attempt from within the Party to resist the fact that "Jews administer everything," a report from Kremenchug stated that the priority was "to expel all Jewish communists from the Party because only Jews are in the Opposition."[17]

In this context, calls for pogroms are not surprising. Traditional appeals to "Beat the Yids, and save Russia!" occasionally emerged both in oral and written form through private conversations and anonymous fliers in Soviet Ukraine.[18] In 1926, in the Kherson province, two Jewish families fled their homes following the appearance of fliers calling for a pogrom. One warned, "Jews are very dangerous for our Ukraine, it is time to expel them. . . . . Beat the Yids, save Russia!"[19] In early 1930, in the city of Volochysk, near Proskurov, the author of an anonymous complaint called for action against Jewish communists: "Beat the Yids and save Russia!"[20] Calls for acts of violence to resist "Jewish rule" were not uncommon. In the summer of 1926, in the city of Kiev, a group of "Orthodox workers [promised] to have an uprising [to] demonstrate that we are powerful and strong; you Jews have fun in the meantime, drinking our blood, . . . your rule over us will soon be over." This promise of revenge through violence echoed in Odessa, in August 1926, when an unemployed construction worker pledged that "a pogrom against the Jews in the near future will allow us to be free and live well."[21] The transportation

workers in the city of Kherson vowed to organize an insurrection against the Jews, "the only ones who always carry a wallet [and] . . . now spin the carousel; but we are waiting for the time when there will be an anti-Jewish pogrom."[22] At the end of 1929, in the village of Malo-Mikhailovka (Malo-Mikhaylivka), in the Vasilkovskii district, an anti-Soviet flier criticized Stalin's "Great Turn" and collectivization by planning a revolt against the Jews: "Our group will strike, we will suppress all the Jews, and I myself will kill the Jewish chairman of the cooperative . . . they are taking from us our last piece of bread. Our Makhno group is not dormant but will help the Ukrainian people beat the Jews . . . this is how we fulfill the Five-Year Plan."[23]

In 1930, the GPU intercepted in Odessa a call for anti-Jewish violence conceived as a form of resistance and revenge against collectivization and industrialization. A worker in the local First Oil Factory noted, "[O]ne can now observe the most unprecedented violence in history because Jews are in power and want to destroy all other nations, especially the Russian one, they . . . persecute workers and bully the peasants, stealing from them, driving them out of Soviet housing, and leaving them without clothes and without blood." A second worker from the same factory in Odessa added, "Outside the city peasants have launched the uprising . . . we must support it and begin to kill [the Jews] since they are now killing us."[24] The desire to punish the Jews for their increased visibility in the economic and political sectors was remarkable. Not unlike the rage that took over the American south when blacks "refused to keep their heads down," these expressions of discontent and animosity stemmed also from a kind of nostalgia by antisemitic elements for the days when pogroms were real and when Jews knew their place.

The fact that the Soviet state stigmatized this form of violence as socially unacceptable elicited frustration. When an assistant prosecutor charged the presiding judge and his associates in the District Court of Krasnoyarsk with antisemitism in 1929, one of the associate judges publicly stated that, if not for the fear of losing his job, he would openly call for pogroms.[25] That same year, in the small town of Makarov (Makariv), thirty miles from Kiev, members of the Communist Youth League openly voiced their disappointment and disbelief over the fact that pogroms were forbidden: "we can't even organize Jewish pogroms now!"[26] In the Red Star factory in the city of Zinovevsk, workers (including Communist Party members) voiced their mistrust of the state's campaign against antisemitism. They asked suspiciously, "[W]hy such a loud campaign in defense of the Jews when there is no trace of pogroms?"[27]

Some Soviet citizens employed the term "pogrom" metaphorically to label measures that targeted the Jewish collective, even in the absence of actual

violence. In November 1928, when the Union of Housing Cooperatives in Proskurov fired ten Jews, they immediately petitioned Soviet authorities and complained about "disguised antisemitism."[28] In their letter to the People's Commissar of Justice the Jewish petitioners argued that everyone understood the instruction to fire all Jews as a pogrom. Issuing the order, the head of the union himself acknowledged, "This is a real Jewish pogrom." One of the two Russians fired alongside the ten Jews also remarked, "I fell victim of a Jewish pogrom."[29] Here, the actors involved used the term "pogrom" figuratively to identify a measure that discriminated against the Jewish group and as such was deemed illegal by the Soviet state.

In a similar instance, the term "pogrom" described the violence perpetrated against one individual. The incident took place in 1929 Leningrad, in the Soviet School no. 200. Here, a group of students beat up the head of the school's student council, one Gurevich, who was Jewish. The reporter described the attack as a "miniature pogrom."[30] In the social life of the Soviet Union therefore, the term "pogrom" captured banned deeds of violence or discrimination directed against Jews as such or as members of the political or intellectual elites.

But if violence targeting the Jews ebbed, it did not disappear entirely;[31] it changed in nature. While it remained largely circumscribed to attacks on individuals, at times it elicited unprecedented brutality, especially in new social settings where Jews and non-Jews came to interact and compete for the first time.[32] In one such instance, which received wide coverage in the Soviet press, a young Jewish worker by the name of Beirach was systematically harassed in the factory where he worked, in the city of Seredy, in Ukraine. The factory managers, some of whom were Communist Party members and members of the Komsomol, beat the lad to death after months of ongoing torture.[33]

Occasionally, attacks targeting Jews spiraled into what most historians would consider pogroms, namely, punitive public acts of violence carried out by members of one ethnic group against the members of another group, which might or might not involve looting or murder.[34] Some of these attacks took place in the context of the government's campaign to promote Jewish settlement on land in Ukraine and Belorussia, which in the mind of many local peasants turned the Jews into agents of Bolshevik colonization. In April 1929, attacks against Jewish settlers erupted in southwestern Ukraine. According to *Pravda*, in the Jewish colony of Pokrovsk, in the region of Zaporozhye (Zaporizhzhya), the violence resulted in the death of several Jewish settlers. Many others fled their homes in fear and did not return for an extended period of time; the Soviet court in Kharkov sentenced the five Ukrainian

peasants responsible to death by shooting. The investigation confirmed "the anti-Soviet and pogrom-like nature of the attack. Every single family in the colony suffered in the attack," *Pravda* reported.[35] In a similar instance, the Jewish residents of the colony of Alekseievka, in Belorussia, were attacked and expelled. The Soviet court eventually sentenced the pogrom leader to prison and deprived him of citizenship for five years. The head of the town council was also sentenced to prison for a year, together with the two policemen who failed to intervene in defense of the colony's Jewish residents.[36]

But Soviet authorities (and perhaps Jews themselves) resisted discussing these instances as actual pogroms: while they acknowledged the "pogrom-like" character of the attacks, they could not quite bring themselves to label them "pogroms." Identifying them as such would have impinged on the Soviet Jewish myth centered on the very absence of pogroms. On September 12, 1928, a group of seasonal workers in Rudnya, in the Smolensk province, attacked two young Jewish men, shattered the windows of the home of a local Jewish resident, and attempted to coerce the policeman into partaking in the violence.[37] Twelve people were arrested. Neither *Pravda* nor *Der Emes* (the central Yiddish organ in the USSR) actually referred to the incident as a pogrom. As Soviet publications, they tended to ascribe the pogrom template to state-organized anti-Jewish violence, and to violence carried out by counter-revolutionary forces as in the context of the civil war. The perpetrators are thus usually referred to as "members of the Black Hundreds" or "bandits."

That same year, the official organ of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, was alone in reporting an instance of anti-Jewish violence that erupted in the streets of the Belorussian city of Mogilev (Mohilev). Here a group of sixty Red Army recruits on their way to report for service attacked the local Jewish population. While other Soviet press organs—Jewish and non-Jewish alike—discounted the news, *Komsomolskaia Pravda* refrained from branding the incident a "pogrom."[38] In other words, the Soviet understanding of pogrom carried an ideologically driven blind spot: had instances of anti-Jewish violence like the ones in Rudnya and Mogilev occurred in neighboring Poland or Romania, the Soviets would have rushed to label them "pogroms."

And while they indeed occurred, pogroms remained a sporadic phenomenon in Soviet life, largely contained by the state. In reporting from Moscow in the 1920s, a Jewish correspondent for one of the most widely read Yiddish newspapers in Poland acknowledged that the key question in assessing the nature of Soviet antisemitism was not whether it existed or not but whether it constituted an actual threat for Jews. He admitted that

the new criminality of pogroms and antisemitic propaganda drove many Soviet citizens to channel their hostility toward Jews through legal outlets and charges of alleged anti-Soviet behavior. And even though antisemitism "might have touched wider social strata in the USSR," argued the journalist, "it did not represent a real danger." In fact, as long as the Soviet state was in charge, "the antisemitic lemmings would not turn into antisemitic wolves." In other words, as long as the Soviet system held sway "there was no imminent threat for the Jews," and no risk of pogroms.[39] But during World War II things changed. As soon as the Soviet state collapsed and the German occupying forces swallowed up its infrastructure, anti-Jewish violence returned as a legitimate and acceptable public weapon to be used whenever need be against the Jewish collective.[40]

Pogroms During and After the War

A few weeks after *Kristallnacht*, the so-called Night of the Broken Glass, when on November 9–10, 1938 an unprecedented wave of pogroms erupted throughout Germany, *Pravda* issued a statement condemning the violence. From the cities of Leningrad, Kiev, and Tbilisi, Soviet intellectuals came together to condemn the "fascist cannibals and pogromists" and to stand with the Jews. On November 28, hundreds of celebrated writers, artists, composers, musicians, scientists, and architects, assembled with thousands of people at the Leningrad State Philharmonic, at the Kiev Theater Ivan Franko, and at the Tbilisi State Drama Theater Rustaveli to denounce the pogroms. As *Pravda* stated, "With anger and commotion we see the pogrom work of fascism. We feel the pain and anguish of the Jewish people, divested in Germany of food and blood, and turned into the target of . . . violence, robbery, and extermination carried out with impunity."[41] For the Soviets these were prototypical pogroms. Not only were they systematically organized by an evil political system that, not unlike tsarism, encouraged the active participation of police forces and state bureaucrats. But they also resulted in the systematic arrest of the Jewish victims themselves.

The word "pogrom" lived on in Soviet society even as Stalin moved closer to Hitler, and as the Soviet media stopped criticizing Germany and reporting about the persecution of German Jews. Information about attacks on Jews in the territories of the Third Reich trickled through into the Soviet press.[42] And when, in the wake of the August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact, Soviet censorship further limited the discussion of antisemitism, news of anti-Jewish legislation and violence made its way to the USSR through

word of mouth.[43] The seesaw of remembering and forgetting anti-Jewish violence from 1938 to 1941 was reminiscent of the fluctuating memory of the pogroms of the civil war of the 1920s and 1930s. Soviet authorities widely discussed anti-Jewish violence in order to denigrate the Germany of the 1938 *Kristallnacht*. But during the years of the Hitler-Stalin pact they quashed information about pogroms. News of the systematic deportations of Jews in the northern and western regions of Poland did not appear in the Soviet press—not even in the Soviet Yiddish press.

The experience of a "total ethnic war" fueled antisemitism among the population in German-occupied territories. Episodes of violence against Jews intensified, setting off unrestrained ferocity. The exposure to relentless, exterminatory, antisemitic rhetoric and practices[44] inevitably bolstered the memory of anti-Bolshevik sentiment, which had been contained by force during the interwar period. Evacuating toward the Russian interior, Jerzy Edison, a Polish Jew who fled to the Soviet Union from the Kielce province in 1939 recorded the resurgence of antisemitism. In the winter of 1941, he took note of the opinion of his fellow Jewish refugees as they "whisper[ed] that the approach of the Nazi troops had brought to the surface the antisemitism among the Russian people, which had been suppressed by fear of the NKVD."[45] At the Novosibirsk train-station, on his way to Chelyabinsk, Edison noticed that,

> [A]s the Jews sat despondently on their poor little bags, overwhelmed by a sense of defeat, Russians said openly and freely that Hitler's columns were marching deep into their land, liberating more and more territory. They said the word "liberating" with great satisfaction, aiming their hatred at the Soviet government. But their words were also laced with antisemitic barbs. Almost every sentence teemed with the words Hebrew and Jew always accompanied by coarse Russian epithets . . . but none of them openly voiced any opposition to the Soviet government. Instead they cursed and insulted the Jews, and their anger against the Jews replaced their anger at the NKVD, the authorities, the entire Soviet system.[46]

Sometime later, after witnessing how two Russian officers threw off the train and killed a Jewish disabled soldier who had challenged their claim that Jews refused to fight during the war, Edison attempted to report the crime to the local authorities in Kuibyshev. But he was met with silence. "The chief of police checked the [officers'] papers and said that he could do nothing. They

were travelling to the front and he had no power to stop them. I asked if there was no punishment for such savage murderers. Couldn't they report them to a higher authority? But my words were for naught. The chief let the criminals go free and began to check my documents."[47]

The status of Jerzy Edison, and of the thousands of Jewish refugees to the Soviet interior, was not as precarious as that of those Jews who during the early months after the German invasion of June 1941 found themselves trapped in the cities and towns of today's eastern Poland, Lithuania, western Belarus, and western Ukraine. These territories, which had been annexed by the Soviets following the 1939 non-aggression pact, and had undergone a systematic and brutal Sovietization campaign, witnessed numerous instances of local anti-Jewish violence. As soon as the Soviets left, in the first few days of the German occupation, a staggering wave of pogroms occurred in these areas.[48] In many places the local population came to see the German occupation as a "liberation" from an overpowering Jewish-Bolshevism. In some cases, the forgotten memory of the events of the civil war impinged on the relations between Jews and non-Jews under the Germans, and ultimately played out in the violence unleashed after June 1941. In the city of Lvov (Lviv), for example, Ukrainian police and peasants carried out a brutal pogrom framing the violence as the "days of Petliura." This happened less than twenty years after Scholem Schwarzbard murdered the Ukrainian political leader Symon Petliura. More than 2,000 Jews were killed over a three-day period; many perpetrators justified the violence as an act of revenge for the death of a Ukrainian national hero at the hands of a Jew, who had allegedly followed Soviet orders.[49]

German reports from the summer of 1941 confirmed the role that the "forgotten memory" of the civil war played out in the local population's attitude toward the murder of the Jews. As one *Einsatzgruppen* report stated, "At the time of the Revolution, especially in 1919, the Ukrainians took revenge against the Jews and conducted pogroms against them in which they killed thousands. This action gave expression to the profound and uncompromising conflict between the Ukrainians and the Jews. The adult Ukrainian generation retains some of this hatred."[50]

At least a hundred German-sponsored, large-scale, anti-Jewish killing operations were perpetrated during the early months of World War II on the Eastern Front. In the city of Rovno, for instance, more than 23,000 Jewish men, women, and children were murdered by the Germans and their collaborators on November 7–9, 1941.[51] This killing operation came to be known as the second Babi Yar—to echo the name of the ravine northwest

of the city of Kiev where two months earlier the SS, the German police units and local collaborators murdered more than 33,700 Jews in two days. This was one of the largest mass murder operations at any individual location during World War II. To be sure, the Soviet state's relative success in preserving the social order after the civil war, in taming anti-Jewish hostility, and largely preventing mass violence against the Jews yielded its fruits during the extraordinary conditions of war. However, active collaboration with the Germans and instances of pogroms did occur in the "old" Soviet lands, even if less frequently.[52] Whether those Jews who actively experienced the violence promoted by the Germans associated it with the pogroms of the civil war is hard to pinpoint. However, some who did characterized the violence as "pogroms," thus underscoring a connection with pre-World War II memories of violence. When twenty-two-year-old Raisa Abramovna, together with thousands of Jews, found herself in the Minsk ghetto and got word of the ongoing killings at the site of the "Yama," the pit when 5,000 Jews were murdered on March 2, 1942, she referred to the event as a pogrom. The fear of further "pogroms" encouraged her to search for hiding places within the ghetto and eventually to flee and join the Soviet partisans.[53]

In the fall of 1941, a group of Ukrainian men carried out a pogrom in downtown Kiev. They abused, robbed, and brutally murdered a number of Jewish residents of Podol (Podil), the city's historic Jewish neighborhood. Most of them were women who neglected to register at the assembly point for deportation to Babi Yar, the site where tens of thousands of Jews were massacred at the end of that month.[54] The Jewish women were buried alive in Podol. One of them was only seventeen years old.[55] One of the perpetrators, who betrayed a Soviet Jewish prisoner of war and military doctor by turning him in to the Germans, justified his actions by expressing his ideological repulsion for communism. Picking up on the mythology of Judeo-Bolshevism, and blending it with his personal experience of the Great Terror, he emphasized his desire to punish the Jews for their support of the Soviet government: "They drank the blood of my daughter. Now let others drink theirs."[56] His daughter had been arrested by the NKVD in 1939.[57] As the purported true supporters of the Soviet regime—as well as its purported true beneficiaries—Jews were held accountable for Stalin's crimes, including the Holodomor, the politically engineered famine in Soviet Ukraine that in 1932–33 claimed the lives of at least four million people.[58] This collective responsibility was then tied into the personal dimension of the perpetrators' lives, as personal grievances against communism legitimized anti-Jewish violence.[59]

Disseminated during the civil war and stifled by Soviet authorities during the 1920s and 1930s, the Judeo-Bolshevik myth could now thrive under the Germans. In nexus with Nazi propaganda, the myth re-emerged powerfully, and it flourished. The specific condition of Jews as definite targets for extermination made their choice of siding with the communists practical, obvious, and necessary. Between annihilation and support for the Soviet cause, the Jews were left with only one alternative.[60] On the other hand, many locals were encouraged and pressured into adjusting to and accepting the Nazi policies. These not only placed the remaining Jews outside the law but also created an environment that rewarded acts of betrayal and violent behavior toward members of the ostracized group.[61] More than ever before Jews chose the Soviets, and more than ever before many non-Jewish civilians from old and new territories expressed their grievances against the Bolshevik system by celebrating the notion of Judeo-Bolshevism. In other words, if during the civil war the choice to favor the Bolsheviks was for Jews almost universal, during the war of extermination it was universal.

As Bolshevik power returned to Kiev in December 1943, Soviet authorities launched a prompt and thorough investigation of the Podol case. The NKGB methodically questioned the neighborhood's residents, collecting information about the incident from people who had participated in the violence, witnessed it, or simply heard about it.[62] In the end, three perpetrators of the pogrom were sentenced to death and in January 1944 publicly executed in front of hundreds of Kiev residents.[63] To underscore the monstrosity of the allegedly unusual crime, and emphasize that collaboration had been an exceptional choice among Soviet citizens, the punishment turned exemplary.[64] Carried out with great fanfare, the execution taught an important lesson in the annals of the Soviet politics of memory: the enemies of the Soviet system, who had also murdered Jews, were radicals acting on the margins of society whose behavior was uncommon for citizens of the USSR.

Predictably, however, the Soviet response to the atrocities carried out in the context of the German occupation was not always consistent. It depended on many variables, including time and place. But in general, as reports from the different security bodies informed the leadership of the Communist Party of the intensification of antisemitism among the local population, the authorities made the conscious choice to ignore and forget in order to rebuild postwar society. Not unlike twenty years earlier, the specific murder of Jews was turned into a collective Soviet *lieu de mémoire*, while those who had carried out anti-Jewish violence were readmitted into the grand narrative of the brotherhood of peoples.[65]

"Violent Antisemitism Raged in the Area. Hitler Had Left His Legacy"

In a letter dated May 18, 1944, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Viacheslav Molotov, the head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee,[66] Solomon Mikhoels, wrote on behalf of displaced Soviet Jews, "In so many places—Berdichev, Mogilev-Podolsk, Balta, Zhmerinka, Vinnitsa—so many [Holocaust] survivors still live on the territory of the former ghettos. Their homes are not being returned to them—nor is the property stolen from them."[67] Mikhoels added, "local authorities not only do not grant survivors the necessary consideration, but actually hideously break Soviet law, and do not do anything to help establish for them Soviet conditions of life." The Soviet response to these postwar "abnormal" conditions was slow and arbitrary. Rarely did Soviet authorities demand the "return of homes and property" to their prewar rightful owners. And when they did, the decision elicited frustration and anger on the part of those residents who had seized the property from their Jewish neighbors. Violent outbursts of revenge over Jewish claims for property restitution could easily ensue.

By the end of 1945, 50,000 Jews returned to Kiev from evacuation. The city was half-destroyed, it lacked food and other essentials, and its residents faced skyrocketing prices on the black market. In this desperate context, Jewish returnees who had survived the war demanded their property back, in particular their homes. Not unlike some twenty years earlier, in the aftermath of the civil war, local authorities often ignored the appeals. Their priorities lay elsewhere. When, in the winter of 1944, sixteen-year-old Yuri Rakhman returned to his hometown of Vinnitsa with his father, he discovered that another family was living in their apartment. The family had no intention of leaving the premises, and the local authorities did nothing to return the apartment to its prewar owners. Instead, they gave Yuri's father permission for the family to live in any vacant apartment of their choice in the city. But not in their own apartment, which had been occupied by their neighbors.[68]

In sharp contrast to the interwar period, central authorities opted for noninvolvement, paying little heed to the large body of evidence gathered by the NKGB documenting the growing wave of antisemitism. In the words of a Jewish observer who had left Kharkov for Kiev in March 1944, and then had fled Kiev for Palestine in 1945, "when Jews return to their places of residence, they don't receive any help from anyone. Ukrainians meet the returning Jews with open hostility. During the first few weeks following liberation . . . no Jew

would go out alone at night."[69] Another Jewish refugee who after liberation found the scorched Kiev train-station in shambles, observed that

> [O]n the step of a house that was half-burned down, . . . a group of homeless people with their bags and suitcases and downcast eyes. They were Kiev Jews who had evacuated deep into Russia when the war broke out. Now they had returned, but the authorities would not 'register' them, which meant that they would not permit them to live in their own city. Hitler had left his legacy. . . . the people of Kiev did not want the few surviving Jews to return, because their Christian neighbors had moved into their homes and taken their things, and they were afraid that if the Jews came back, they would have to return everything that they had stolen.[70]

Observing the surge in antisemitism in the 1940s in Ukraine, another Jewish writer admitted that while the "Hitlerites" had promoted this darker side of the masses, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and head of the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine, Nikita Khrushchev, stood idle, failing to condemn or oppose the anti-Jewish uproar. He chose instead to tolerate it, and even to encourage it.[71]

Khrushchev feared that the return of Soviet power to the territories recently liberated from the Germans and annexed by the USSR could intersect with the widespread myth of Jewish communism. In early November 1943, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine employed in the secretariat Maria Chelminskaia (Roza Hudes), a Polish Jewish communist who had fled to Kiev during the war and who, under false identity, had remained active in the underground communist cell throughout the Nazi occupation.[72] Her allegiance to the Party made her politically reliable and a trustful player in the re-Sovietization of Kiev. However, her ethnic identity, which she disclosed in the job application questionnaire, ultimately cost her the position. When confronted with the secret directive to restrict the employment of Jews in prominent positions in Ukraine, Chelminskaia wrote to Khrushchev in disbelief. Khrushchev replied:

> I understand that as a Jew you contemplate this question from a subjective point of view. But we are objective. Jews in the past committed many sins against the Ukrainian people. And the people hate them for this reason. Jews are not needed in our Ukraine. I also believe that for Ukrainian Jews who survived Hitler's attempt to exterminate

> them, it would be better not to return here better yet if they moved to Birobidzhan. . . . We are in Ukraine, you know? Do you understand? This is Ukraine. And we are not interested in the Ukrainian people interpreting the return of the Soviet authorities as the return of the Jews. Fill out a new questionnaire without mentioning your Jewish background. Use your false documents, in which you appear as a pure Ukrainian.[73]

These words of the First Secretary of the CPU not only captured the *Zeitgeist* of the postwar period; they also marked a sea change in the state's official position on antisemitism, proclaiming its legitimacy. Unlike the 1920s, after the war there was no public campaign against antisemitism in the Soviet Union, when one was desperately needed. And this absence made it more difficult for Jews to counter the recrudescence of antisemitism and almost impossible to rely on the authorities for protection. The return of anti-Jewish violence to the postwar Soviet territories grew out of this context.[74]

The Return of the Unthinkable

In the fall of 1945, a pogrom caused havoc in the streets of Kiev.[75] On the afternoon of September 4, Lieutenant Josef Rozenstein, a Jewish NKGB senior radio operator, was on his way back home from the bread store when he was attacked by two servicemen. First they confronted him with the antisemitic slur of "Tashkent partisan," implying that like most Jews, instead of fighting at the front, he had "enjoyed" evacuation; then they physically attacked him. In retaliation, the lieutenant took the law into his own hands and sought revenge. Wearing his NKGB uniform for a semblance of legality, he shot and killed both men. This action sparked instant unrest in the city: a large crowd gathered around the dead bodies and attacked the lieutenant's wife and a Jewish man passing by. Both were severely injured. The next day, the servicemen's funeral further ignited ethnic tensions, as the procession quickly turned into a pogrom. It began with antisemitic slogans, chanted through the city's main streets, and eventually deteriorated into violence against Jews, in particular in the area around the marketplace. Thirty-six of the one hundred victims in the attacks were hospitalized; five were murdered. The violence also affected a number of non-Jewish civilians "who looked like Jews." Apparently the local police did not intervene until a few days later. But Lieutenant Rozenstein was no Scholem Schwarzbard, and on October 1, 1945, the military tribunal sentenced him to death.[76]

Shocked by the Kiev pogrom, four Jewish Communist Party members and war veterans who had fought at the front wrote a passionate letter addressed to Stalin, to the NKVD chairman Lavrentii Beria, and to *Pravda*'s chief editor, P. Pospelov. They openly complained about the abnormal political atmosphere in their city, where antisemitism reigned. They protested that "'[B]eat the Yids,' the favorite slogan of German fascists, Ukrainian nationalists, and the tsarist Black Hundreds is heard through the streets of the capital of Ukraine, in the trams, trolley-buses, stores, the marketplace, and even in some Soviet institutions."[77] The war veterans voiced their dismay, hinting at the collapse of the founding myth of Soviet Jewry, namely the absence of pogroms: "[I]t is a disgrace for our Party and our socialist motherland that a Jewish pogrom occurred here in Kiev under the Soviets . . . after our victory over German fascism. [I]t will be written in the history of our Revolution that the first Jewish pogrom since the collapse of tsarism occurred . . . on the 28th year since the October Revolution."[78]

The long letter was above all an open attack on local authorities. The petitioners identified them as chiefly responsible for the context that led to the violence, which could result, they feared, in a pogrom of even greater magnitude, "one worthy of Hitler and Goebbels."[79] According to the veterans, Rozenstein's decision to kill the two servicemen who attacked him grew out of the local authorities' indifference to the plight of the Jews.[80] They were "enemies of the people," argued the petitioners, who, in their commitment to racial antisemitism and Ukrainian nationalism, had collaborated with the Germans and, in the postwar period, infiltrated the Soviet local power structure. This explained why, they claimed, Jews were expelled from public positions at the regional and at the local level; why institutions of higher learning introduced quotas for Jewish students; why the Jewish theater had no building to perform in the city; and why the press had remained silent about Jewish suffering under the Germans.[81] The war veterans attempted to alert Stalin and Beria about the harmful impact that these policies had on Jews themselves. While some Jewish communist stormed the city Party organization, tore up their Party membership card and threw it on the floor in protest; others attempted to flee Ukraine for Poland or America, in search of a place with no antisemitism; while Jewish pioneers and members of the Komsomol, who never before had experienced their Jewishness, suddenly experienced a national reawakening because of the hatred of other children.

But the times had changed. In the postwar years central authorities did not rebuke local authorities for ignoring the official Soviet policy on antisemitism—even if the sanctioned myth on the absence of antisemitism

had never been further from the reality on the ground. The four Jewish veterans, who somewhat naively had appealed to Moscow to intervene and counter antisemitism in their "beautiful Ukrainian republic," were punished. The letter was conveyed to Khrushchev on October 12, 1945. The four men were arrested, accused of bourgeois nationalism, and executed shortly thereafter.[82]

No Pogroms Means No Antisemitism

During World War II the Soviet Union saw the revival of virulent popular antisemitism—first in Nazi-occupied territories, then in distant evacuation centers in Central Asia, and eventually in the Russian interior.[83] For Jews, the events of the Holocaust eclipsed the memory of previous pogroms. Jewish writers and journalists might have benefited from their experience and memory of the pogroms of the civil war to cope with and respond to the destruction perpetrated during World War II, as they returned to the poetry and writings on the subject they had produced decades before. But it is unlikely, for instance, that the Jews of Minsk who survived the ghetto and the partisan warfare in the forests, and who returned to the city to find most of its Jewish population murdered, thought about the pogroms of the civil war as they stood by the memorial to commemorate the 5,000 Jews killed in the heart of the city by the Germans and their collaborators.[84] It is also unlikely that the Jews who came together in the Moscow synagogue in 1945 to recite the memorial prayer and commemorate the victims of the Holocaust thought back to the victims of the civil war. As Jerzy Edison recorded, "It was a harrowing sight, the whole community saying *kaddish* together . . . we stood crowded between the walls of the synagogue, Jews from far flung places, Jews from Russia, Poland, Romania, Lithuania."[85] For most, the new trauma washed away the traces of the old.

Recent scholarship has identified the roots of outbursts of antisemitic violence in periods and contexts of socioeconomic and political transition.[86] During times of change, especially when the change is extreme and sudden, antisemitism—like racism and xenophobia—can grow and intensify. The Bolshevik experiment was ripe with ongoing transitions and extreme changes, one after the other, in a succession of micro-revolutions, albeit in the absence of regime change. This was a system that lacked a sense of real stability, as it constantly transitioned into the "next phase" of the Revolution. While the next phase always offered unprecedented excitement and opportunities, it also inspired deep fears and anxieties. In the 1920s and 1930s, the state

domesticated the extreme anti-Jewish violence of the civil war. Outbreaks of punitive public violence against Jews rarely occurred. Even though Jews could be cast in the role of the outsider and blamed for the insecurity and terror experienced by so many during the NEP years and at the time of massive collectivization and industrialization, anti-Jewish violence remained banned in the social order mandated by the state. And yet, the ongoing changes and transitions, and the sudden disruptions made of economic and political crises, kept the Soviet lands fertile for the growth, or at least the preservation, of antisemitism.

The same state that unsettled the power equilibrium and disrupted the deep-rooted social barriers between Jews and non-Jews in place under the tsar, alienated many Soviet citizens. Non-Jewish civilians retained the memory of the pogrom as an instrument to punish or put an end to alleged Jewish domination, which they perceived as unethical. They retained its memory to express discontent against the Jews as alleged agents of the state. Antisemitism and anti-Sovietness met harmoniously under German occupation. The brutality of the war of extermination launched a new period of transition for Soviet citizens, who were now encouraged to act on preexisting ideas and myths of secret Jewish power, this time actively cultivated by Nazi propaganda. Then came the Soviet victory over Germany; the return of Soviet power introduced yet again another era of transition. But this time, the state's official position on antisemitism shifted, allowing neighbors, local authorities, and state officials to disapprove of Jewish agency, and to restrain them from breaking out of the social norms of behavior considered acceptable for the minority group. The state largely encouraged a silent position for the members of the Jewish minority. But it did not promote violence against it. Rather, by regulating eruptions of violence in society, the Soviets remained loyal to their pledge, to the alliance struck during the civil war, to the Soviet Jewish myth of the absence of pogroms.

Writing to Ilia Ehrenburg to seek his advice, a group of Soviet Jews were at a loss in this new context of antisemitism. They indirectly mentioned the Soviet Jewish myth. In a letter dated October 12, 1952, they asked the writer "how to fight against antisemitism if the courts ignore us . . . in the West there might be pogroms, not here . . . and yet [what do we do?]"[87] With the exception of the first Jewish pogrom in the USSR, which took place in Kiev in September 1945, the Soviet lands did not witness massive punitive anti-Jewish violence, despite the many official and unofficial anti-Jewish measures. After all, at the height of the "Black Years" and in the midst of the anti-Jewish

campaigns, Stalin himself had warned Ehrenburg that Jews should not complain about antisemitism since the state did not tolerate pogroms. And if there were no pogroms, then there was no antisemitism. Stalin's words echoed once again the absolute and sacrosanct nature of the Soviet state's monopoly on violence.

6 FROM CANNIBALISM TO POLITICAL MURDER

MODERN PERMUTATIONS OF THE BLOOD LIBEL

Traveling through Ukraine with the victorious Red Army, a Jewish tank commander from Birobidzhan described what he did not see. Along the Dnieper (Dnipro), from Kiev to Zhitomir and Vinnitsa, and into western Ukraine, he encountered no Jews in areas where, before the German invasion, hundreds of thousands had lived. "From Kiev," wrote the tank commander, "I rode through hundreds of . . . places along the right bank of the Dnieper, but there wasn't a Jew left in any of them. Nor did I find any Jews in Zhitomir, Berdichev, Belaia Tserkov . . . or in the thousands of villages and towns we took in Ukraine. There were thousands and thousands of Jews living in these places when the Germans came."[1]

World War II drastically swayed the habits and rhetoric of violence in the German-occupied territories of the Soviet Union. During the total ethnic war unleashed in June 1941, a revived anti-Bolshevik sentiment quickly came to intersect with wartime anti-Jewish propaganda. And just like the anti-Bolshevik propaganda from the civil war period, anti-Jewish propaganda from World War II could feature a ritual murder subtext: the blood libel trope drew new inspiration from the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism.

In a drawing made in November 1941, a Ukrainian worker depicted Stalin holding a knife in his hand and surrounded by hundreds of skulls. He seemingly built his amateur art on the well-known anti-Bolshevik depictions from the civil war and the Polish-Soviet war of Leon Trotsky surrounded by a sea of skulls and bones.[2] In the 1941 drawing the worker portrayed the Soviet leader toiling on behalf of the bloodthirsty Jew, as the embodiment of the Judeo-Bolshevik. The text on the drawing stated, "Stalin is the bloody enemy of the people who brought destruction to the

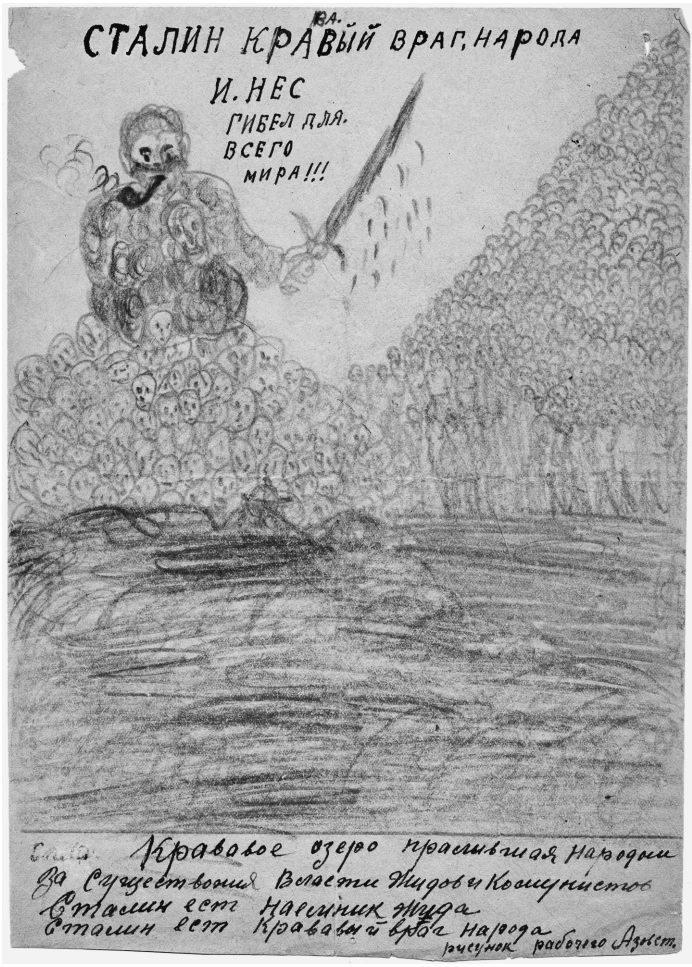
Legacy of Blood. Elissa Bemporad, Oxford University Press (2019). © Oxford University Press.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190466459.001.0001

whole world! A sea of blood flows from the people, in the name of the regime of the Yids and the Communists. Stalin is the hireling of the Yids; Stalin is the bloody enemy of the people."[3] This is not an iconographic representation of ritual murder. But it does capture the ways in which during World War II Jews came to be seen as the prime actors of a modern version of ritual murder, this time carried out in the name of communism.[4]

At times Nazi propaganda explicitly encouraged the exploitation of the blood libel theme in conjunction with the Judeo-Bolshevik myth: ritual murder and communism both embodied the Jewish spirit and lust for power.[5] In the spring of 1942, for example, the Germans executed all the Jews in the small town of Medvyn, in the Kiev province, accusing them of murdering for ritual purposes a Red Army soldier. When the body of the prisoner of war was discovered, the Germans spread the blood libel rumor; they staged a trial and sentenced the Jews to death. Prior to their execution, the victims were tortured.[6] Although there was no immediate reason for the Germans to exploit ritual murder to justify their extermination policy, they still chose to do so.

In 1943, a book on the blood libel, *The Jewish Ritual Murder*, was published and distributed throughout German-occupied Soviet territories.[7] The Nazi Party member Helmut Schramm wrote it to promote anti-Bolshevik propaganda and stimulate antisemitism among those handling the Jewish question.[8] In the forward to the book, Johann Von Leers, a prominent Third Reich ideologue and a professor known for his anti-Jewish polemics, reminded the reader that Judaism was a "biologically hereditary [form of] criminality." "He who struggles against Judaism," added the professor, "does the work of the Lord and fights God's battle. . . . I wish him success in the struggle." Von Leers dated his foreword to the German edition, "at the beginning of the War Year 1941."[9]

The Ukrainian-language daily newspaper *The Ukrainian Courier*, published in Kiev during the German occupation, provides another example of the blood libel theme exploited during the war. The August 1943 issue featured a detailed analysis of the murder of Tsar Nicholas II and his family. Published on "the 25th anniversary of the massacre at Ekaterinburg," and entitled "The Jews' Right Hand," the account presented the assassination of the tsarist family as a ritual murder carried out by Jewish Bolsheviks. "The decision to execute the Tsar," stated the author of the article, "was sanctioned by the Jewish *kahal* long before the Revolution . . . [and was carried out by] the *zhidok* [little kike] Yankel Sverdlov, one of the most powerful people in the Kremlin under Lenin."[10] The order to execute the Romanov family came directly from Lenin, but the telegram from Moscow with the directive was



A 1941 anti-Soviet drawing depicts Stalin holding a sword dripping with blood and towering over a mountain of skulls. The caption in Russian reads: "Stalin is the bloody enemy of the people who brought destruction to the whole world! A sea of blood flows from the people, in the name of the regime of the Yids and the Communists. Stalin is the hireling of the Yid; Stalin is the bloody enemy of the people." The drawing was produced in Ukraine under German occupation during World War II. *YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (RG. 222, Institut der NSDAP zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, box 17, f. 142, p. 200).*

indeed signed by Sverdlov, who was Jewish, and who in 1918 was chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets of the Russian SFSR. In its account of the murder, the Ukrainian newspaper provided the names and ethnicity of the "major killers" of the tsarist family, identifying seven out of nine as Jewish. In fact, only two of the executioners were of Jewish

origin, namely, Yakov Yurovski, at the time head of the Cheka, the Soviet secret police, and Filipp Goloshchekin, a member of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee. The article stated, "The execution of the royal family can be unmistakably described as a Jewish ritual performance . . . the ritual murder of the Aryan race, of the Aryan spirit . . . as indicated by the mysterious kabalistic signs found in the basement [of the building where the tsar was executed]."[11]

But ritual murder accusations turned up even in those regions, such as Central Asia, that did not come under direct German military occupation and were thus removed from vigorous wartime propaganda.[12] Soviet Kirghizia, for example, which saw a momentous growth in its Jewish population from the small prewar Bukharan and Ashkenazi communities, as thousands of refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied territories settled there, experienced the blood allegation, albeit recast by the new wartime context.[13] The refugees included both Soviet citizens (Jews and non-Jews alike) and Polish Jews, who as former residents of prewar Poland had Polish citizenship. In the summer of 1942, a group of twenty Jewish women—wives of Red Army military personnel who were fighting at the front—addressed a letter to Stalin and the Central Committee of the Kirgiz Communist Party. They complained about antisemitism in the cities of Tokmak and Frunze, and observed:

> [D]uring the days of the [Great] Patriotic War, when all peoples should be always united and engaged in a common effort to strengthen the rear and help the front, here [in our cities] we observe and experience in person terrible medieval antisemitism. . . . [Accusations that] Jews are killing children of other nations, drinking their blood and using their body parts to make soup.[14]

Wartime food shortages, rumors about cannibalism on the Eastern Front, hearsay of the blood libel allegation, as well as the actual murder of two children in the city of Tokmak served as the background—and perhaps pretext—for the accusations. These were well-removed from the more traditional Passover plot, which involved the abduction of Christian children, and the use of their blood for religious purposes, in particular for the consumption of matzah. Both the investigation conducted by the Party authorities in Tokmak and Frunze and the ensuing NKVD report confirmed the Jewish women's grievance. The report stated that widespread antisemitic comments resulting in harassment and physical abuse targeting Jews fell into three major categories: first, that Russians were dying at the front because of the Jews; second,

that prices were high because of the Jews; and, finally, that Jews were killing the children of other nationalities, drinking their blood, and using their body parts to make soup.[15] The secularization of the blood libel was thus well under way, as the food containing human flesh and blood replaced the matzah, in a murder that was no longer necessarily "ritual" in nature but "merely" predatory and merciless cannibalism. The NKVD report also singled out one instance in which the librarian in Tokmak's children's library accused the head physician of the local pediatric hospital—who was Jewish—of collecting "fresh children's blood."[16] But the report contained no remark about the possible ritual needs for the blood.[17] Because most Soviet Jews were no longer religious by 1942, the idea that they used blood for a religious ritual (like matzah) was less plausible. Bloodthirstiness became thus a Jewish ethnic or racial trait rather than a religious one.

The Soviet authorities' immediate reaction to the events in Tokmak and Frunze seems rather unusual, especially when compared to the utter lack of response elicited by the blood libel accusation that occurred in Soviet Kirghizia one year later, in mid-1943. There, not only was Rachel Twerski's grievance disregarded, but the regional prosecutor also dismissed her from her job.[18] One possible explanation for the NKVD's prompt reaction lies in the specific timing of the 1942 letter, addressed to Stalin at a critical stage in the war. The affair could have caused some embarrassment for the USSR, which hoped that American Jewry would sway the US government to support the Soviet war effort.[19] On the other hand, by the spring of 1943 the Soviets had prevailed at Stalingrad against the Germans. Against the backdrop of the momentous war effort, and with a victorious Red Army, blood libels, and antisemitism in general, became a trivial matter for Soviet authorities.[20]

There Is Human Blood in the Synagogue! A Case Study of Cannibalism in Soviet Lvov

In the summer of 1945, the city of Lvov, liberated from the Germans and incorporated by the Soviets into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, became the arena of a ritual murder accusation against the Jews. According to the allegations, local Jews had kidnapped Polish and Ukrainian children, murdered them, and hidden their corpses within the confines of one of the local synagogues. Instigated by the rumors, a crowd of four hundred people gathered in the Lvov Krakovskii marketplace by the neighboring synagogue, at Vuhilna Street 3. Amidst the commotion and a number of physical attacks against Jewish passers-by, passionate assertions resounded through the crowd,

as "pogrom talk" swiftly seized everyone's emotions. These included statements of disappointment that Hitler had not come to Lvov some twenty years earlier, which would have prevented the Jews from killing children. Some people voiced their rage over the traces of blood of the allegedly murdered children in the synagogue courtyard. Others cried that Jews stole children, slaughtered them, and turned their bodies into food to sell at the marketplace.[21] Without the prompt intervention of the Lvov city police, these accusations most likely would have spiraled into a pogrom, as anti-Jewish violence triggered by blood libel rumors had become a common feature in the postwar (and post-Holocaust) East European landscape immediately following the defeat of the Germans and the establishment of Soviet power.

Instances of anti-Jewish violence elicited by false blood libel allegations occurred in at least a dozen Polish cities and towns from 1945 to 1946. The first one took place in Cracow, on August 11, 1945, when Jews were accused of abducting and murdering thirteen (or perhaps as many as eighty) Christian children and hiding their corpses in the local synagogue. Jewish property came under attack, a fire was set inside the synagogue, and at least one Jew was killed and many wounded.[22] During the pogrom of July 4, 1946, that erupted in the city of Kielce following a ritual murder accusation, forty-two Jews were killed and more than forty were injured.[23] Though there are numerous and substantial studies on the blood libel in postwar Poland, there is virtually no research on the ritual murder accusation in those territories that—like the city of Lvov—came under Soviet occupation after World War II. Historically a multiethnic city inhabited mostly by Poles and Jews, with a smaller percentage of Ukrainians, Lvov was first occupied by the Soviet Union in the fall of 1939 under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 23, 1939, and subsequently invaded by the German army in June 1941.

While the Lvov case shares some similarities with other instances of anti-Jewish violence that occurred in postwar Poland, it also exhibits some distinct features that pertain to the Soviet government's response to the ritual murder accusation. The events in Lvov also confirm the changes that occurred in the allegation itself, shedding light on the complicated interplay between the blood libel accusation, World War II, and the newly fragile social environment that emerged in many cities and towns now under communism.

The ritual murder accusation that erupted in the summer of 1945 in Lvov took place in the wake of the return of hundreds of Jewish refugees, most of them Polish Jews who had evacuated to Central Asia during the war and who sought repatriation to Poland in 1945. For the Jewish refugees resettlement came with major obstacles, disappointments, growing tensions with the

local population over questions of property restitution, and the psychological trauma stemming from the demise of one of the major centers of Jewish life in pre-Holocaust Europe. In September 1939, more than 150,000 Jews had lived in Lvov (where they constituted 33 percent of the urban population), but in the summer of 1944, following the Red Army's liberation of the city, only 2,571 Jews remained.[24]

However, the Jewish refugees were also returning to a city in which most of its non-Jewish inhabitants had experienced major violence and an intense ordeal under German occupation, to a city that underwent massive population changes and radical transformations under the newly established Soviet rule.[25] A predominantly Polish city during the interwar period, after 1944 Lvov experienced ruthless Sovietization and ethnic cleansing. In the postwar period, the city became predominantly Ukrainian, ethnically and linguistically.

Many Jews took shelter in the synagogue building on Vuhilna Street 3, one of the few synagogues still standing in postwar Lvov. From June 14, 1945, to July 14, 1946, the Lvov Police Department, the Lvov Public Prosecutor's Office, the Prosecutor's Office of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and the NKVD investigated the accusation that alleged Jews were killing Polish and Ukrainian children in the synagogue and then hiding their bodies in the building's basement.[26] In the report of the preliminary investigation, the senior investigator of the Lvov Prosecutor's Office stated, as if to reassure the public of the thoroughness and diligence of his search, "[N]ot one body was found in the building of the synagogue, nor in the nearby apartments [where Jews, including the local rabbi, lived], nor in the basement or cellars, nor in the sewer pipes. . . . No evidence or witnesses of the killing of children in the synagogue was discovered."[27] The police found instead large quantities of chicken feathers and traces of chicken blood—of the poultry slaughtered according to the Jewish ritual—in the synagogue courtyard. The fact that in 1945 the Jews in Lvov performed ritual slaughter in the synagogue courtyard might have been, at least for some, evocative of an alleged Jewish adeptness with blood rituals, and reminiscent of the other alleged Jewish ritual, namely, the blood libel. According to the second round of investigations, the accusation originated in the marketplace located next to the synagogue, where hundreds had gathered, and where many engaged in "counter-revolutionary disturbance."[28]

The police report recorded the details of the incident, which gained momentum as Jews were leaving the synagogue building. At the time of the accusation, one Polish woman declared that "the bodies of Polish children with

slit throats" were found in the synagogue. She then substantiated her charge by stating that the police had already arrested a large number of Jews for this crime. In response to the allegation, a group of people chased a Jewish woman through the marketplace and attempted to kill her because, as they shouted, "Poles hid [you] from the Germans and [you] killed Polish children!"[29] Another person involved in the unrest at the marketplace reportedly stated that "Jews steal our children, slaughter them and then turn them into sausages to sell; that the blood of the murdered children is in the synagogue courtyard."[30] One complainant claimed that he saw the bodies of eighteen Polish and Ukrainian children in the synagogue;[31] another one concluded that there were in fact sixteen bodies, and as he physically attacked a Jewish passer-by, he encouraged the residents of Lvov, "to set fire to the synagogue and kill all the kikes, because they kill [our] children."[32] Another complainant argued that the number of bodies in the synagogue amounted to six hundred.

Soviet authorities proceeded with a criminal case against those responsible for rousing "national hatred." A second search of the synagogue's premises followed to ascertain that indeed no murder of children had taken place. The NKVD eventually arrested five people of Ukrainian and Polish nationality "for incitement of national hatred against the Jewish people."[33] One of them in particular disquieted Soviet authorities: twenty-five-year-old Ivan M. Fedak had worked for the Germans from 1941 until the Soviets liberated the city; he served in the police force in Lvov, as well as in the SS Division Halychyna, a German military organization made up of Ukrainian volunteers.[34] The Lvov Prosecutor's Office found out that Fedak not only had engaged "in blackmail and contraband under the Germans, but that he had also taken part in the massacres of Jews and Red Army soldiers."[35] The trial confirmed the guilt of the five defendants, who were charged with "counter-revolutionary disturbance and incitement of national hatred against the Jewish people." They were sentenced to two years in prison.

A few observations seem apt when analyzing this instance of ritual murder accusation. The Lvov blood libel should be considered within the general context of the ethnic relations among Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews under Soviet rule.[36] Not unlike other instances of antisemitism in post-Holocaust Eastern Europe (which in several places escalated into actual pogroms with Jewish casualties), the case of ritual murder accusation in 1945 Lvov also found its trigger in the heightened tensions between Jews and non-Jews, in the collaboration of the local population with the Germans, in the three years of anti-Jewish propaganda disseminated by the Nazis, and in the appropriation of Jewish property and the Jewish struggle to have it returned.

Although there was no direct mention of a specific Jewish religious ritual, the fact that the alleged murders of Polish and Ukrainian children took place within the synagogue implied some ritual aspect of the assumed crime, both for the initiators of the accusation and for the targets of the accusation. The day of the incident did not coincide with any specific Jewish religious holiday. The Jews who were leaving the synagogue might have assembled there for the customary Thursday morning Torah scroll reading (June 14, 1945, was a Thursday). However, the ritual aspect of the alleged murder is markedly secondary and mostly inferred, it seems. The allegation of cannibalism, on the other hand, spurred by the hunger and miserable conditions that so many had experienced during and after the war, looms prominently. This is a form of cannibalism disconnected from the assumed religious context of Passover. The social memory of widespread cannibalism during the Holodomor, the Ukrainian famine of 1932–33, and the siege of Leningrad, might have played a role in the alleged abuse.[37] Moreover, there seems to have been an actual case of cannibalism in Nazi-occupied Lvov: archival documents mention wartime rumors of human body parts being sold at the city's marketplace, which eventually set off a German investigation that resulted in the arrest of several people involved in the case. Since those Jews who had not yet been exterminated by the Germans and their collaborators had no free access to the marketplace, those arrested were by definition not Jewish.[38]

While reminiscent of the alleged Jewish practice of religiously driven blood rituals, the Lvov case was also the outcome of wartime violence. Real instances of cannibalism and food shortages removed the blood libel from its ritual aspect and promoted the emergence of a new notion of Jewish murder, with no direct mention of ritual. The Lvov case was in this respect not unique. In fact, blaming Jews of committing "a modern ritual murder," or acts of cannibalism against non-Jewish children, and profiteering by selling human flesh at the marketplace, occasionally emerged in the immediate postwar months and years. In the summer of 1945, in the city of Krivoy Rog (Kryvyi Rih), in the Dnepropetrovsk (Dnipro) province, the Soviet secret police arrested a group of Ukrainians and Russians. The NKGB accused them of distributing fliers throughout nearby cities about an alleged Jewish gang involved in "taking Russian children, killing them, and then making sausages and meat pies out of the children's flesh to sell at the marketplace."[39] The fliers also denounced "the oppressors of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples," as the Jewish alleged murderers were labeled, of using the children's flesh to make soap to sell in the marketplace.[40] The latter was an allusion to rumored instances of Germans converting human remains of Jewish corpses into soap during World War II.[41]

During the NKGB investigation, one of the women arrested and prosecuted in connection with the antisemitic incidents in the Dnepropetrovsk province admitted that in July 1945, while working as a teacher in the Children's Home of Dubno, she placed the following note in the auditorium: "Children, love your own people, and hate the kikes, who will skin you alive."[42]

Local authorities reacted to the Lvov blood libel more firmly and swiftly than they did to blood libels in Central Asia, to the growing antisemitism in Kiev in 1944, or, for that matter, to the copycat events that took place in Cracow in August 1945, and elsewhere in Poland during 1945–46. In Lvov, Soviet authorities prosecuted the accusers and maintained law and order. A deep connection existed between the presence of a weak Soviet infrastructure and ability to exert control over society—for example, in the regions of Central Asia and in the recently liberated city of Kiev—and outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. Unlike in different cities in Poland in 1945 and 1946, in Lvov authorities prevented a pogrom from taking place. Because of prompt police involvement, the calls to burn down the synagogue and murder the Jews were not as successful as they were in Cracow or Kielce. Here the "pogrom talk" never turned into actual violence. Part of the newly annexed Soviet territory, Lvov had not been Soviet before World War II. Consequently, the authorities did not trust the local Polish and Ukrainian inhabitants, whom they suspected of collaboration with the Germans. The Soviets identified the ritual murder accusation, and virulent antisemitism in general, with fascism and Nazism. From their perspective the accusers were not only antisemitic but anti-Soviet as well; after all, in Lvov, Ukrainians and Poles had been living under Nazism since 1941, and allegedly had cultivated their bourgeois and fascist tendencies. From the Soviet perspective, the situation in Lvov in 1945 was essentially the same as in southern Russia and Ukraine in 1919–20, during the civil war. The Soviets discredited violent antisemitism as a weapon used by the political enemy.

Whether the participants in the Lvov case actually believed that Jews engaged in killing children or not is hard to tell. It is, however, noteworthy that they resorted to this specific form of antisemitic accusation as opposed to other expressions. Through the blood libel the participants in the accusation shared some common knowledge and practices, which they used to reaffirm, and perhaps recreate, the familiar social order destroyed by the Germans during the war, and then wiped out by the new political system. In spite of the growing violence and ethnic cleansing sparked during Operation Vistula (with 218,711 Poles forcibly evacuated from Lvov alone in 1944–46),[43] Poles and Ukrainians found commonalities—perhaps even Christian ones reinforced

by a common Catholic identity to oppose to Russian Orthodoxy—to reject the Soviets.[44]

Similar dynamics of a Polish-Ukrainian alliance through anti-Jewish violence had already emerged in Lvov during the pogrom of 1941.[45] In 1945, Poles and Ukrainians forged a subcommunity of common interests and fears that was religiously and culturally based, as well as politically grounded. In this micropolity of anti-Soviet resentment, discussing ritual murder became acceptable for the populace but not necessarily for the state, as the blood libel merged with anti-communist accusations, and the traditional blood libel narrative legitimized the claim of Judeo-Bolshevism. In the minds of many Poles and Ukrainians, the depraved crimes of the Jews and of the communists became intertwined. The inhabitants of newly Sovietized Lvov could now unite and take revenge on Jews who had always engaged in killing their children by means of the traditional blood libel, the new wartime ritual murder, or Judeo-Bolshevism. In the midst of a postwar crisis of identity, borders, and political power, memories of blood libel stories could easily intersect with fears of cannibalism and Judeo-Bolshevism.

But ultimately Soviet authorities changed their mind about the culprits in the Lvov affair. By April 1946, less than one year after their arrest, the new head of the Prosecutor's Office and the NKVD released them for ostensible lack of evidence.[46] And even though Fedak had actively collaborated with the Germans to undermine Soviet power, the follow-up investigation of late 1946 took his words at face value. He was not guilty of instigating national hatred against the Jewish people and participating in the ritual murder accusation because, as he claimed, he was not at the site of the incident when it happened. "During that day and at that time I was in one of the restaurants in the city of Lvov . . . [I even] left my watch with the manager," he asserted with confidence.[47] The way in which Soviet authorities quickly revised their approach to the crime was a strong sign of the times. By late 1946, the Soviets showed little interest in the subject of Nazi collaboration or antisemitism.

The Doctors' Plot, or the Beilis Case of the Atomic Age

The general absence of public condemnation of blood libels during and after the war, particularly from the early 1940s to 1953, is not that surprising given the growing state antisemitism promoted by Stalin. With the post–World War II reversal of the Bolshevik emancipation project, the notion of Soviet universalism and "brotherhood of peoples" seemed to reject the Jews.[48] The "Jewish question"—or whether Jews should be accepted, and if so, on what

terms—was not asked openly and publicly. But antisemitism became more virulent. It became a widely employed and somewhat accepted cultural code. If in the interwar period antisemitism had gone into hiding at the official level, the Cold War unearthed it once again and made it a respectable attitude, position, and emotion. The new geopolitical order, in combination with the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel, made Jews the most unreliable and "foreign" ethnic group in the Soviet Union. Their patriotism could not be trusted. Even Polina Zhemchuzhina, wife of Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Molotov, was not immune to political distrust, notwithstanding her privileged position of power and her well-documented allegiance to the Party. For publicly disclosing her Jewish identity to Golda Meir, Israel's minister plenipotentiary to the USSR in a visit to Moscow in the fall of 1948, Stalin had Zhemchuzhina arrested and sent to the Gulag.

Expressions of state antisemitism ranged from hidden anti-Jewish quotas at universities and government posts to accusations of "cosmopolitanism" and arrests of students for allegedly organizing Zionist groups. Born in Moscow in 1938, Semyon Reznik recalled frequently coming across claims that Jews used Christian blood for their Passover bread among the children of his neighborhood in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[49] But because of the general climate of the time, it never occurred to him—or to his parents—to address the local police and report the antisemitic comments, mostly for fear of reprisals. It could not have been otherwise in the midst of the "Doctors' Plot," the unmasking of the alleged conspiracy by Jewish doctors to assassinate Soviet leaders.

On January 13, 1953, the Soviet news agency TASS announced the discovery of a scheme to carry out the medical murder of the Red Army's leadership. At the center of the plot were nine doctors (six of whom were Jewish), who were also charged with murdering two prominent Communist Party leaders, Alexander Scherbakov and Andrei Zhdanov. Removed from the use of Christian blood to bake matzah during Passover, the accusation morphed into a secularized form of political ritual murder. The Cold War fear of imperialism, the angst over "International Jewry's scheme to rule the world," and memories of the ritual murder legend of the Christ-killers coalesced harmoniously in the Doctors' Plot.[50]

A systematic campaign targeting the alleged enemies began immediately after the announcement of the exposed plot. Both the press and the radio widely reported on the wicked plans of the doctors garbed in white who served "imperialism, Zionism, and the Jewish Joint Distribution of America."[51] Caricatures, articles, and feuilletons with a clear anti-Jewish

thrust appeared almost daily, quickly generating a sense of panic among Jews, as everyone was all too eager to identify a culprit.[52] In the popular response to the Doctors' Plot, at the local level in particular, the images of the blood and power-thirsty Jewish enemy merged to reenact the killing of any member of the Russian (and Soviet) people, not only of the elites. The widespread outburst of virulent antisemitism between January and April 1953, the month of Stalin's death, indicates that the Soviet leader had tapped into a potent and vibrant pre-existing demonic image. While generated by his Machiavellian intent to stoke antisemitism for political advantage, in its popular response the Doctors' Plot was also a reincarnation of the blood libel canard.

The latent belief that Jews were capable of committing such a crime allowed for the accusation to adjust according to the shifting political climate, tracking the need to identify new enemies. Whether the manipulation of the blood libel memory for political reasons was conscious or not, it fit well with the specter of the murderous malpractice of Jewish doctors. Not unlike premodern times, the blood libel could serve as a way to cope with children's mortality. It could also be used to explain the general negligence in Soviet hospitals, or to justify instances of wartime cannibalism.

A prehistory of conspiracies, rumors, and fears played into the origin and reception of the Doctors' Plot. The paranoia over potential enemies ready to poison Soviet citizens was not something new in Stalinist society. During the Purges, the general mistrust for an omnipresent enemy invigorated this fear. One terror victim, for example, was accused of poisoning dogs with the same venom he planned to use to poison the water in his own town.[53] Rumors about the poisoning of children occasionally surfaced during World War II.[54] And rumors about Jewish doctors purposefully performing medical malpractice to take the life of Soviet citizens unfolded before the "official" Doctors' Plot. In mid-1938, a number of German-Jewish doctors, who had fled the Third Reich for the Soviet Union and found employment in Soviet clinics, were arrested as doctor-poisoners and shot in connection with the open political trial in Moscow against the "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rightists and Trotskyites." During the trial, a group of physicians and politicians was accused of poisoning the writer Maxim Gorky and chairman of the Supreme Soviet of National Economy Valerian Kuybyshev. In the investigation's protocols and in the press, the overtly Jewish name of one Dr. Levin loomed large.[55]

A miniature Doctors' Plot occurred in Leningrad in June 1950, following the reports about a child discovered in a hidden chamber with his neck slashed to draw blood. Rumors about the secret crimes of a group of doctors quickly spread. According to the rumors, a mysterious, well-known

doctor used the blood of murdered children to produce a special ointment for his medical experiments. Of the one hundred Soviet citizens implicated in the case, continued the reports, only three of them were Russian. The rest were all Jewish.[56] Similar rumors about an existing Jewish peril, albeit unrelated to the medical sphere, were recorded in Moscow. This time the rumors pinpointed a conspiracy to blow up five major factories and even the whole Red Square. Once again, Jews were the offenders.[57] A violent and homicidal internal enemy let loose on society, which could be used to cope with the fear of any imminent threat.

Petitions to Soviet authorities complaining about Jews taking over positions of power and influence in society soared exponentially before the Doctors' Plot, in turn feeding the conspiracy rumors. In May 1949, a letter addressed to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party complained about Jewish domination in the medical business in Leningrad. Here, argued the author of the letter, hospital managers, directors, heads of clinics, chief surgeons, pharmacists, and medical inspectors were all Jewish. They helped each other, favoring family members in achieving success in the medical profession and helping patients gain access to the best cure. The letter called for the Party institutions to intervene, give the Russian people an opportunity to show how skilled and capable they were, and free them from the Jewish yoke. The author also resorted to the widespread myth about Jews dodging the war effort: while Russian doctors fought heroically at the front, Jewish doctors hid in the hospitals, and eventually managed to receive the status of invalids and collect a pension they did not deserve.[58]

The letter received immediate attention from the secretary of the Leningrad City Committee and Regional Committee of the Communist Party, Vasily Andrianov. His decision on May 9 to carry out an anti-Jewish purge in the Leningrad medical institutions was endorsed first by the second secretary of the Central Committee and deputy prime minister Georgy Malenkov,[59] and then by the Minister for State Security (MGB), Viktor S. Abakumov.[60] The signals from above, given by central authorities, were now perfectly synchronized with the popular opinion that emerged from below. While it affected all Jews, the Doctors' Plot represented the most perfect excuse for getting rid of Jews in positions of power and influence. The state endorsed this affinity ostensibly to protect itself and its citizens.[61]

Accusations against Jewish pediatricians appeared in Moscow. In late February 1953, when doctor Tanya Beskina warned the mother of one of her patients that her daughter had pneumonia and should be hospitalized at once, Ms. Stepanenko replied, "I'd rather let her die at home than in *your* hospital

from poison." One of the neighbors commented to a friend (loudly enough so that Beskina could hear): "Have you heard what *they* do? In the hospitals, they infect Russian babies with cancer. Under the guise of injections, they infect them with cancer bacillus."[62] The local clinic eventually dismissed Beskina from her job.

In a very similar case, a young mother brought an empty penicillin vial to the Moscow Tarasevich Institute, complaining that her baby was ill with pneumonia and that the medical condition had worsened since the penicillin injection. In a panic she requested to ascertain the presence of any poison. The Jewish doctor reminded her that an allergic reaction to antibiotics was not uncommon. But the mother announced that she would not give any more medicine to the baby. "[W]hen I said that she was endangering the baby's life," explained the doctor, "she declared with frenzied determination that she would prefer her baby die of pneumonia rather than poison."[63] In the same spirit, Dr. Shamis, a well-known Moscow Jewish gynecologist, and a recipient of several awards from the Ministry of Public Health for his outstanding service, submitted his resignation following the Doctors' Plot. "If the child is stillborn or with any defect," a father vented at him, "you can only blame yourself. I know your people. Don't think that we're illiterate. We read the newspapers."[64]

Correspondence intercepted in February 1953 by the Control Committee of the Ministry of State Security of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic confirmed just how widespread the conviction that Jewish medical professionals poisoned children was. A Vilnius resident condemned a Jewish doctor who had recently been arrested in Moscow in conjunction with the plot; the doctor had lived in the Lithuanian capital and had directed a local children's clinic there. "Instead of giving children a vaccine against tuberculosis," stated the author of the letter, "he poisoned them with tuberculosis."[65] In the anxious words of another Vilnius resident, who accused Jewish pharmacists of poisoning the medication sold to non-Jews, "The children's mortality rate has recently grown. Children are dying of tuberculosis."[66] The author of a letter sent from Vilnius to the Russian town of Chebarkul, in the province of Chelyabinsk, stated that "[T]hese Israelites (*izraeltsy*) want to kill us. Have you read the newspapers, did you see what is happening in Moscow? [Did you see] what a group of Jewish doctors did and what they could still do? How many powerful people they have killed and how many more they will kill! If it depended on me, I'd hang them all."[67]

Similar opinions were not only conveyed in the privacy of personal correspondence; they were also asserted publicly, unapologetically. Commenting

on the arrest of a Jewish pediatrician detained in connection with the Doctors' Plot in Vilnius, one comrade Petrov, who was a member of the Communist Party and worked in the Ministry of Justice of the Lithuanian SSR, stated his opinion about the crime. Directing his comment to a Jewish colleague, he boldly declared in front of all the employees at the Ministry of Justice that instead of curing children the Jewish pediatrician "killed them by infecting them with cancer."[68] What we see here is a generalization from the Doctors' Plot: not just the specific doctors are criminals but all Jewish doctors are murderers, and not just Jewish doctors are murderers but all Jews. Moreover, the political dimension—so prominent in the original Doctors' Plot—is absent in these other accusations. There is nothing about espionage, agents of imperialism, or Zionism. In that sense, it is unadulterated classical antisemitism: namely, this is how Jews are, murderous monsters.

The accusations were not unique to the newly occupied Soviet territories of the postwar years, which included the Lithuanian SSR and its capital Vilnius. But they also emerged in the provinces of the historical areas of the Soviet Union, which had undergone two decades of Sovietization and had been, at least in theory, exposed to the official campaigns against antisemitism of the interwar years. A factory worker in Dneprodzerzhinsk, in the Dnepropetrovsk province of the Ukrainian SSR, reported to the City Party Committee the criminal activity of a Jewish doctor who had prescribed pills for her child. "[S]ince the child could not swallow them," reported the worker, "the doctor told him to bite it. After biting it, the child found a small stone inside. It turned out that the pill contained a polished bit of lead the size of a watermelon seed with a sharp point."[69] In the city of Dnepropetrovsk, Communist Party officials stated that in 1952 the highest mortality rate in any local hospital or medical institution was reported at the children's hospital headed by chief physician R. S. Zaltsman (an obviously Jewish name).[70] Indeed, the "unmasking" of the doctors could also trigger fears reminiscent of more traditional blood libels. Upon learning about the Doctors' Plot, a young college student in Simferopol, the capital city of Crimea, fled in terror the apartment of the Jewish woman from whom she rented a room. The student was convinced that "[It is] now too dangerous—Passover is approaching and they might take blood from me."[71]

In this new version of the blood libel, which blossomed through the "modern" framework of the Doctors' Plot, Jews were still killing, or at least harming, children in particular, albeit usually not for ritual purposes. This charge echoed through the Soviet Gulag as well. As in most labor camps, imprisoned inmates relied heavily on outside visitors, usually their own relatives,

for information about current events. At a labor camp near Kazan, a sixteen-year-old revealed to her imprisoned brother that the "district doctor, a Jew, committed suicide after administering lethal injections to thirty-five newborn babies, and killing all of them."[72] At the same labor camp, the response to the unmasking of the alleged Jewish medical assassins took on the shape of posters depicting a bearded man with a crooked nose, dressed in a white doctor's garb, in the act of cutting a baby, "whose blood flowed like a river." The caption "killer doctors" enclosed the poster. Comments like "Hey, Little Abraham, what are your doctors doing to our children?" could be heard through the camp.[73] In this secularized permutation, the age-old image of Jew-murderer was fused with the Soviet image of the political traitor. But whether secular or religious in essence, for many Jews and non-Jews alike the Doctors' Plot was a blood libel. As one contemporary put it, it was the Beilis case of the atomic age.[74]

"Jews Are Cannibals, Kick Them Out of Tashkent!"

In the second half of the 1950s a young Lithuanian woman employed in a publishing house in the city of Vilnius applied to become a member of the Communist Party. She was asked to tackle a number of questions to prove her political loyalty, the degree of her Marxist education, and her Party consciousness. One of the questions related to antisemitism. In theory this remained a sensitive issue, especially in the context of the less Sovietized, newly annexed territories. The would-be Communist Party member stated that she had encountered some harmful opinions about Jews among Lithuanians. One of the comments she had often come across related to the fact that Jews "use the blood of Christian children to bake matzah." The young woman expressed her understanding of the question, in a resolute way. Soviet official politics on antisemitism clearly dictated her understanding: "How could you accuse the Jews of the Soviet Union of engaging in such a [crime]? Of course, the story is entirely different if you ask me about Orthodox Jews; in this case it is indeed possible. But not Soviet Jews. [They] belong to the most progressive society in the world; how can you accuse them of ritual murder?"[75] The phrase "Orthodox Jews" referred to the harmful religiosity of the potential murderers, which echoed through the widespread attacks on Judaism of the postwar years. But by using the words "Orthodox Jews," the young Lithuanian woman also implied the probable geographic location of Jews who engaged in ritual murder, namely, the fascist and imperialist countries of the West. In other words, while ritual murder could not occur in the Soviet lands, where

the Soviet state had liberated Jews from this practice, it was a "real" Jewish ritual everywhere else.

Neither endorsed nor contested by Soviet authorities, blood accusations had become part of Soviet "unofficial culture" in the postwar years.[76] Not unlike the interwar period, the incidence of blood libels intensified in the midst of the systematic anti-religious campaigns of the late 1950s and 1960s. The only difference was that under Khrushchev the anti-religious campaigns singled out Judaism for criticism. If on average 27,000 books and pamphlets condemned the Christian religion; 18,000 criticized religious sects; and 6,000 denigrated Islam; a remarkable 46,000 vilified Judaism. More specifically, in the years 1959–64, about two and half million copies of books and pamphlets appeared in the USSR to combat Judaism.[77] This at a time when Jews made up 1.1 percent of the total population of the USSR.

The attack on Judaism took on an overtly antisemitic dimension.[78] Trofim Kychko's book *Judaism Without Embellishment* is a case in point.[79] A collaborator with the Germans,[80] Kychko exploited some stereotypical imagery reminiscent of Nazi antisemitic propaganda. His book described a dangerous Jewish religious male dedicated exclusively to destabilizing the Soviet Union by promoting capitalism and Zionism under the guise of Judaism. The author did not miss the chance of reminding the reader that Jews had murdered the leader of the Ukrainian nationalist government Symon Petliura, and were thus inherently incompatible with Ukrainian aspirations for independence.[81] The prestigious Ukrainian Academy of Sciences published the book in 1963, while *Izvestiia* hailed it as an important study on the reactionary nature of Judaism. One whole year passed before *Pravda* warned that the book might be interpreted in the spirit of antisemitism. Central authorities in Moscow eventually withdrew it from publication.[82]

The Soviet active condemnation of religion in general, and Judaism in particular, indirectly triggered a return to the more traditional and religiously based narrative of ritual murder. At least ten cases of ritual murder accusations were recorded under Khrushchev, the majority occurring in Lithuania, the Caucasus, and Uzbekistan; some of them unleashed outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence.[83] Traditional antisemitism and folklore, in combination with perceptions of Jews as proxies for the new occupying Soviet power, might have contributed to the outbreak of accusations in Lithuania.[84] The fact that Central Asia and the Caucasus were less modernized areas of the USSR helps explain why the accusation still had a ritual ring to it. In Ukraine, on the other hand, the elevated number of economic trials—cases of economic offenses involving a disproportionately high number of Jewish defendants—might

have served as a distraction from the blood libel. In the early 1960s in particular, the majority of those arrested and sentenced to death for economic crimes, which included embezzlement, counterfeiting, trading in gold, and speculation in foreign currencies, were Jews. This disproportion might be accountable for the seeming absence of ritual murder accusations in Ukraine.[85]

In 1957, rumors that a Christian child had been murdered by the Jews "for matzah" inside the Vilnius synagogue, where they also supposedly counterfeited money, spread through the city.[86] The absence of public condemnation on the part of Soviet authorities reinforced the respectability of the accusation. One year later, in September 1958, two women in the Lithuanian town of Plunge accused a local Jew of plotting to kill the son of one of the two women and kidnap a girl. Another resident testified that he had witnessed how the Jewish man had already kidnapped two more girls: the children were being held at the home of one Grolman, which served as the unofficial synagogue of the Plunge Jewish community. The incident occurred during market day, when hundreds of people from surrounding towns and villages came together in Plunge to exchange merchandise, goods, but also ideas and emotions. A crowd of more than six hundred people gathered around the secret synagogue in search for the children's bodies, as comments about the consumption of children's blood by religious Jews spread quickly.[87] The enraged and excited mob searched through the house and damaged the property. The local police eventually intervened and arrested fourteen people, who were held in prison for a few days on charges of "hooliganism," a widespread conviction under Khrushchev.[88] No word about ritual murder or antisemitism appeared in the public prosecution.

In 1963, just a few weeks before Passover, the body of a six-year-old Lithuanian girl, who had been raped, was found in downtown Vilnius, next to the Green Bridge. Rumors about a ritual murder spread quickly throughout the city. A large crowd gathered at the murder site calling for anti-Jewish violence. As the "pogrom talk" intensified, the police questioned Jewish students only, thus assuming a "Jewish responsibility" in the crime. Some Jewish residents were attacked in the street. The investigation eventually exposed the real culprit, a Lithuanian student. But while reporting the details of the murder case, the local press covered up the ensuing outburst of antisemitism.[89] Unlike the case in the city of Kaniev some thirty years earlier in Ukraine, the chief of police and the other rioters remained publicly unscathed and retained their positions in society.

Discouraged by the absence of criticism of antisemitism in the public sphere, as well as by the lack of support from central authorities, in the

postwar period Soviet Jews reverted to quiet ad hoc responses when it came to blood libels. One of the more traditional responses to antisemitism, especially in the absence of strong advocacy in the Jewish community and in the context of the growing state's apathy, entailed turning for help to a prominent Jewish leader, who could mediate on behalf of the offended party. In June 1962, in the Georgian resort of Tskaltubo, a Jewish war veteran by the name of N. Bomze was accused of drawing blood from a six-year-old boy to sell at the local synagogue; he was immediately arrested. Local Jews turned at once to one of the most powerful and well-respected Soviet Jewish public figures at the time to intercede on their behalf. Only the intervention of Ilia Ehrenburg—a new Soviet *shtadlan*, or intercessor—resulted in Bomze's release from prison after thirty-seven days of detention. Instead of publicly denouncing the incident, Soviet authorities "advised" Bomze to leave the territory of the Georgian Republic and resettle in Moscow (he had traveled to the resort from the Russian SFSR).[90]

Two years earlier, in the city of Buinaksk, in Dagestan, the local communist Party newspaper *Kommunist* published an anti-religious piece that openly stated that "in accordance with the laws of Judaism, Jews should drink Muslim blood at least once a year," and for this reason many Jews bought and sold Muslim blood for consumption for ritual purposes. The local radio broadcast the article.[91] Many residents interpreted this statement, originating from official Soviet channels, as the sanctioned Party line on Judaism.[92] Fearing outbreaks of violence, Jews first turned to the city executive committee, pleading with the authorities to refute the statement—but without success. They then sent a delegation to the capital, Makhachkala, to meet with the first secretary of the regional committee of the Communist Party, to ask him to repudiate the rumors and punish those accountable for spreading the lie. But again, their request fell on deaf ears.

The delegates eventually ventured to Moscow, where central authorities finally addressed their grievance. What set in motion their reaction, however, which included dismissing the chief editor of *Kommunist* and coercing the paper into issuing a statement about the "political mistake" committed, was the fear of an international scandal.[93] This same concern with the other side of the Iron Curtain, pressured Jews in Dagestan to publically deny the existence of any form of popular or state-sponsored antisemitism. In November 1961, Jews from Makhachkala addressed an open letter to the *New York Herald Tribune* denying the report in the American press that a blood libel, with ensuing outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence, had ever taken place in Dagestan. The signatories were as afraid of the consequences of countering the official

Soviet line that there was no antisemitism in the USSR, as they were of the consequences of the blood libel and pogrom they had endured.[94]

The Soviet state never openly acknowledged that the end of antisemitism was largely a myth, especially in the midst of the postwar anti-religious and anti-Zionist campaigns. State authorities ceased to deal with antisemitism as an internal question. Its absence or persistence no longer defined the very political system that was forged in the midst of the civil war, when Lenin exploited it as one of the critical differences between the progressive Soviet system and the backward tsarist one. Disconnected from ideology, antisemitism was now an issue that pertained merely to the realm of foreign policy.[95]

One can map out the status of Jews in Soviet society by tracing the reaction of the police, procurators, judges, neighbors, and the press to the incidents of the blood libel. Police officers often did not intervene; the Soviet press did not issue reports; and even when the Jews, who in some instances were arrested and whose homes were damaged, sued their attackers, the authorities dismissed their grievances and the courts failed to mention antisemitism or ritual murder accusations.[96] Even when ritual murder accusations—or the occasional attacks on Jewish collective property such as synagogues and cemeteries—resulted in the arrest of the culprit, a public trial never ensued.

The blood legend, which remained rooted in Soviet society, evolving according to the socioeconomic and political climate, exposes, among other things, the quandaries of Jewish integration in and acceptance by the surrounding society. If in the 1920s and 1930s Jews felt empowered by their new standing and confided in the state as their protector, by the 1950s and 1960s they had lost faith in the Soviet justice system and in the authorities' interest in redressing their grievances. For many Jews this shift confirmed that exerting leverage on Soviet institutions to publicly rebuke antisemitic attacks was no longer feasible and that their status in society had fundamentally changed.

CONCLUSION

BETWEEN MEMORY AND OBLIVION

The history of Soviet Jews in the interwar and early postwar years is one of simultaneous extraordinary empowerment and enduring vulnerability. It is the story of a minority group that was (or was imagined as being) too Jewish and too Soviet. The story began with a state that rejected pogroms and blood libels as a residue of tsarist reactionary policies but which eventually came to incorporate both manifestations of antisemitism back into its fold. Or at least it did once, when during the latter years of Stalin's reign the state orchestrated from above a "Soviet pogrom" and a "Soviet blood libel," albeit without referring to them as such: namely, the August 12, 1952, murder of the Jewish intelligentsia and the 1953 Doctors' Plot. The 1952 murder was a centrally organized and meticulously planned act of violence that targeted Jewish leaders and intellectuals connected, in one degree or another, with the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee; they were arrested, tortured, and murdered.[1]

If we consider the present-day landscape of the memory and oblivion of the different chapters in this story, we cannot avoid noticing that no commemorative plaque marks the Beilis Affair on the building in Kiev where the trial took place. On the other hand, there is a gravestone in the city cemetery to indicate where the body of the alleged victim of the Beilis murder is buried.[2] We are also left with the new official inquiry into the "real" nature of the death of Russia's last tsar. In the early 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the murder of the Romanov family was used to uproot Bolshevism from the Russian soul and context. At the time, the nationalist organization called *Memory* issued in its eponymous publication (with a circulation of 100,000) several accounts about the "Jewish execution" of the Romanov family, recasting it as "ritual murder."[3]

Legacy of Blood. Elissa Bemporad, Oxford University Press (2019). © Oxford University Press.
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This perfect symbiosis between the Judeo-Bolshevik myth and the more traditional ritual murder has since reemerged as the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation reopened in 2018 the case of the murder of Tsar Nicholas and his family. On the initiative of Bishop Tikhon Shevkunov (who happens to be close to Russia's president Vladimir Putin), the committee pledged to corroborate once and for all whether the execution of the Romanov family in the summer of 1918, on the orders of the Bolsheviks, had in fact been an act of Jewish ritual murder.[4] The implication of course was not only that Jews routinely committed such crimes. It also aligned the Jews very closely with the Bolshevik system, reinforcing the long-standing myth of Judeo-Bolshevism. This is the ultimate undoing of the 1919–20 Commission for Investigating Blood Libel Trials, on which Simon Dubnow had served. Funded by the Soviet Commissariat of Education, the commission was appointed to study and eradicate the legacy of ritual murder. Less than one hundred years later, Russian state organs actually took up the investigation of Jewish ritual murder in the attempt to ascertain what the previous commission had tried to dispel.

Versions of the ritual murder myth persist today. They intersect with notions of Jewish religious rituals and notions of a dangerous enemy preying on society, and they reveal distinctive permutations, as well as a surprising affinity with the classic blood libel narrative. In Ukraine, for example, claims of Jewish ritual murder echoed in the 2009 statements made by the writer Vyacheslav Gudin. Gudin first publicly claimed that fifteen Ukrainian children who had been adopted in Israel had in fact been taken to Israeli medical centers and used for "spare parts." He added that as many as 25,000 Ukrainian children had been taken to Israel over the course of two years to harvest their organs.[5] Some marginal radical right-wing groups then circulated this information. Though prosecutors in Ukraine opened a case investigating this group, they did not bring charges against anyone involved. Furthermore, the same prosecutors opened an investigation to probe the validity of Gudin's remarks.[6]

These accusations of a "Zionist ritual murder" grew most likely out of the numerous publications issued, between 2002 and 2006, by MAUP, the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management. Founded in Ukraine in 1989 as a private higher education institution, in 2004 MAUP released a "study" of the 1840 Damascus blood libel, entitled "The Matzah of Zion" by Mustafa Tlass, who at the time served as the Syrian defense minister and deputy prime minister. In 2005, MAUP organized a conference on the "Jewish-Bolshevik Revolution" as the source of the Red Terror and the

starvation in Ukraine; and in 2006, one of its publications revived the discussion of the Beilis Affair, arguing that back in 1913 the jury did acknowledge the ritual nature of the murder.[7]

Not unlike the custom during the Middle Ages, when the accusation of ritual murder could also serve the purpose of rationalizing high infant mortality rates, today the blood libel can still be used to make sense of the inexplicable and irrational in life. In March 2018, on the eve of Passover, a fire in a movie theater broke out in the Siberian city of Kemerovo, killing sixty-four people, forty-one of them children. Ritual murder rumors quickly spread in the Russian-language social media: Jews orchestrated the fire purposely on the eve of Passover. "[T]his is clearly ritual sacrifice of the Chosen People . . . ," commented one.[8] Similar extremist voices can easily go on a rhetorical rampage and get away with more than they would have at the time of the Soviets also because the Jewish question is no longer in the international spotlight. Following the mass migration of 1.5 million Soviet Jews to the United States, Israel, and Germany over the course of thirty or more years, the Jewish question has lost its significance in public discourse.

Private memories of the blood libel also offer a window into the place that Jews and their real (and alleged) practices occupy in local folklore. When Regina Prudnikova, a native of the Lithuanian town of Pilviskiai, was asked in 2000 if she had ever worked for a Jewish family before World War II, she admitted that she had done so only briefly. She remembered that she took care of a Jewish child until, "I was told that . . . Jews cut you and take your blood, put you in a basement, in a barrel with nails that stab you, so I left everything because I was afraid I would be stabbed." When asked if she actually believed in the veracity of the alleged Jewish ritual, Prudnikova was uncertain and responded obliquely. "[W]ell you know . . . I was young and believed it. I know that they say that Jews can't live without Christian blood, and that during their holidays they have to have at least a drop of that blood to taste."[9]

The belief that drops of Christian blood constitute an essential ingredient in Jewish rituals emerged, for example, in the expeditions conducted in 2004 and 2005 in Ukraine by ethnographer Aleksandr Lvov, who collected information from local residents about their knowledge of Passover. As one informant from the city of Tulchyn (Tulczyn), Vinnitsa province, noted (without providing specific dates), under the Soviets local Jews secretly baked matzah and then often offered it to their non-Jewish neighbors. "Of course we did not eat it [the matzah]. We did not take it. . . . There is something there. . . . It is written in the Bible."[10] Another informant from the village of Zhvanets (Zwaniec), Podolia, was more explicit in identifying

the reasons for refusing to consume matzah: "[They] always added a little drop of human blood. As if it was the blood of Jesus Christ. . . . They generally eat blood."[11] Most of the interviewees questioned by Lvov did not depict Jews as actually murdering Christian children in order to use their blood for ritual purposes, but many definitely deemed blood an essential ingredient for matzah.[12] These are folkloristic beliefs entrenched in the memories of imagined Jewish rituals.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Soviet Union was the all but complete absence of more traditional pogroms throughout its existence. Indeed an accomplishment especially when weighed against the dreary "Black Years" of 1949 to 1953, when equating Jews with imperialists, Zionists, or enemies of the USSR had become culturally acceptable. One could not vilify Jews as Jews, but one could slight and even chastise them as cosmopolitans, speculators, and Zionists, and as such prevent them from entering higher education, fire them from positions of responsibility, and destroy their culture. But one could not physically attack them and their property, and certainly not kill them. Only the state could run an orderly sponsored pogrom, not in the streets but in the prisons and in the Gulag. It is very well possible that between 1949 and 1953, more Jews than any other national group were arrested and charged with espionage, treason, bourgeois nationalism, and links to American imperialism; they were murdered or sent to the gulag, where they often died, in a well-organized state-sponsored pogrom.[13]

The echoes of the official anti-Zionist propaganda, together with the absence of social and educational campaigns condemning antisemitism, encouraged Soviet citizens to be less hesitant in expressing their anti-Jewish prejudice. But they also had to—once again—learn how to mediate their emotions. They had to be mindful that prejudice linked to attitude and ethnic stereotypes, and discrimination, its implementation for social and legal practices, could not entail unrestrained outbreaks of violence, at least as long as the state alone enjoyed absolute monopoly over discrimination and violence. In July 1955, *Party Life*, the official publication of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, issued a sharp warning reminding Soviet leaders and officials not to engage openly in antisemitic activities. This, argued the editors, represented a disavowal of the Party line. They also reminded their readers of Lenin's commitment to condemning antisemitism, a policy that was never officially revoked by the Soviet system, not even in the last years of Stalin's rule.[14]

A Jewish writer captured the pogrom-like, but technically pogrom-less, essence of postwar antisemitism. "It was a sort of cold pogrom," he wrote in

1957. And added that "it is a fact that there are no pogroms, that no blood is being spilled." He also acknowledged, however, "[How] sad and tragic [it is] that forty years after the October Revolution . . . we can seriously conceive of the possibility of pogroms taking place . . . and that [all we are left with is] to boast about being successful at avoiding them."[15] While it is indeed a consolation, the absence of violence did not entirely make up for the loss of status and the growing sense of insecurity among Jews. The looming specter of violence materialized in one unusual instance of pogrom that took place outside Moscow in early October 1959, at the time of Rosh Hashanah. Fliers calling for a pogrom with the well-known refrain of "Beat the Yids and Save Russia!" were distributed around the Kazan railway in and around the Soviet capital.[16] The violence broke out in the town of Malakhovka, which in the interwar period had been the site of a Jewish colony for orphans and a model institution for Communist upbringing. The synagogue and the home of the Jewish cemetery's caretaker were set on fire and burned down. The caretaker and his wife were murdered in the fire.[17]

The fear of pogroms returned at the end of the 1980s, as the Soviet state began to collapse from within and lose control over social order. In early May 1990, a pogrom broke out in the city of Andizhan, in Uzbekistan, which resulted in the destruction of Jewish apartments and in the physical assault against Jews (and Armenians).[18] With the resurgence of right-wing organizations, and in connection with the 1,000-year anniversary of the birth of Christianity in Russia, the fear of anti-Jewish violence became furthermore tangible. And while the prime mover for the mass emigration of thousands of Jews from the Soviet Union was socioeconomic in nature, the reality of antisemitism and the anxiety over potential anti-Jewish violence played a crucial role in the decision to leave at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s.

If we consider the present-day landscape of memory and oblivion of anti-Jewish violence, we are reminded that while the pogroms of the civil war are obfuscated by the Holocaust and the Soviet politics of memory, the legacy of Judeo-Bolshevism and the recollection of the Jewish alliance with communism is alive and kicking. A life-sized bronze monument honoring Symon Petliura, who purposely did not restrain his troops while they carried out pogroms, was unveiled in October 2017—one hundred years after the Revolution—in the city of Vinnitsa, in west-central Ukraine. As a freedom fighter for the Ukrainian people, Petliura is generally not held accountable for anti-Jewish violence, especially when the local memory of Jews as the quintessential supporters of Bolshevik power prevails.[19] Certainly, glorification rarely

meshes with vilification in national histories and memories. Similarly, the identity of a hero can never conflate with that of a perpetrator. In 2005, on the initiative of Vladimir Putin, the remains of General Anton Denikin, who was responsible for some of the most brutal pogroms of the civil war, were returned to Moscow and buried in the cemetery of the Donskoy Monastery. If Soviet history books depicted Denikin as an enemy, loyal to the tsar, a killer and a traitor, today he partakes in the spirit of obsession over glorifying and guarding the past through the restoration of forgotten national heroes.[20] With great pomposity, Putin laid flowers on the Moscow grave of the White movement's leader in May 2009, and sanctioned him as the symbol of the indivisibility of Russia.

As much as Denikin personifies the purity and authenticity of Russian patriotism, Leon Trotsky exemplifies the antihero and the scoundrel who brought communism to Russia. The Russian TV mini-series about Trotsky—not by chance launched in November 2017 to mark the centenary of the Bolshevik Revolution—depicts the Jewish revolutionary as the real and only mastermind of communist power, as personally responsible for the killing of Nicholas II and his family, and as a sexual predator.[21] In an ongoing process of whitewashing and sidestepping history, the pogromist is turned into a national hero and the warden of Russian patriotism, while the Jew becomes once again the sole driving force of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Not unlike the Soviet state decades before, Putin exploited the memory of anti-Jewish violence as a means to exert social and political control in the region. In the context of his brutal war against Ukraine, launched in February 2014, and the ensuing illegal appropriation of Crimea, Putin recalled and manipulated the anti-Jewish violence carried out by Ukrainian forces during the civil war and World War II. He falsely applied the word "pogrom" to the conflict. In order to delegitimize Ukrainians' yearning to be more autonomous from Russia and join the European Union, Putin warned that a fascist-led Ukraine would carry out pogroms against its Jewish minority.[22] He reproached them for being inherently antisemitic, Nazi collaborators, and, of course, pogromists. After all, the predecessors of the rulers of contemporary Ukraine were the same nationalists who had collaborated with Hitler. To date, no pogrom against Jews has been carried out by Ukrainian forces since the inception of the war.

The approximately 400,000 Jews living today in the territories of the former Soviet Union are arguably not at risk of outbursts of public violence.[23] Though Jews still shift back and forth between being privileged

and despised, safe and feared, violence against them is improbable. Today pogroms are much more likely to target other minority groups, including ethnic groups from Central Asia and the Caucasus, Africans, Roma, or members of the LGBTQ community, who have, in a way, become the new Jews of the Soviet lands.[24]

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. See John Doyle Kiler and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); John Doyle Klier, *Russians, Jews and the Pogrom Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Natan Meir, and Israel Bartal, eds., *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).
2. On the structural relationship between Jews and the state and the phenomenon of Jews and royal alliances in Jewish history, see David N. Myers and Alexander Kaye, eds., *The Faith of the Fallen Jews: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and the Writing of Jewish History* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 15, 245.
3. On Jews in the Soviet secret police, see Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics: The Jewish Sections of the CPU, 1917–1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 117; and Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 177.
4. H. Riklin, "Chekistn," *Di royte velt* 1, no. 2 (January–February 1931): 56–63, 74–77.
5. Quote by Brendan McGeever, "Revolution and Anti-Jewish Violence: The Bolsheviks Confront Antisemitism, 1917–1922" (paper presented at the 49th Annual Convention of the ASEEES, November 2017).
6. Itsik Kipnis, "Months and Days," in *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe,* ed. David G. Roskies (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988), 354.
7. André W. M. Gerrits, *The Myth of Jewish Communism: A Historical Interpretation* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2009).
8. For the definitive history of the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism, see Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Idea of Judeo-Bolshevism in Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).

9. For a definition of Bloodlands, see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); see in particular ibid., vii–xix.
10. "Reznia v Proskurove," *Kommunist*, March 7, 1919, 1.
11. Ibid.
12. On the Bolshevik "sacralization of violence" during the civil war, see James Ryan, "The Sacralization of Violence: Bolshevik Justifications for Violence and Terror During the Civil War," *Slavic Review* 74, no. 4 (Winter 2015): 808–31. On anti-Jewish violence in the civil war, see Oleg Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between the Reds and the Whites, 1917–1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
13. For a revision of the traditional narrative of the Russian Civil War as one of revolution against counterrevolution, of Bolshevik Reds against tsarist Whites, see Liudmila Novikova, *An Anti-Bolshevik Alternative: The White Movement and the Civil War in the Russian North*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2018 (trans. Seth Bernstein). On antisemitism in the White Army, see Oleg Budnitskii, "Jews, Pogroms, and the White Movement: A Historiographical Critique," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 1–23.
14. See Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Peter Kenez, *The Defeat of the Whites: Civil War in South Russia, 1919–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 166–77.
15. On the legacy of the violence of World War I for Soviet history, see Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
16. On the deportations that affected about a half million Jews living in communities on the borders of the Russian Empire, see Eric Lohr, "The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportation, Hostages, and Violence During World War I," *The Russian Review* 60, no. 3 (2001): 404–19.
17. On violence against the Mennonite communities, see Abramson, *Prayer for the Government*, 109–10.
18. Elias Heifetz, *The Slaughter of the Jews in the Ukraine in 1919* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1921), 39.
19. David Engel, "What's in a Pogrom? European Jews in the Age of Violence," in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom,* ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Natan Meir, and Israel Bartal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 33.
20. Nine percent of the pogroms of the civil war are attributed to the Red Army. See Z. S. Ostrovskii, ed., *Evreiskie pogromy, 1918–1921* (Moscow: Shkola i kniga, 1926), 75. On pogroms carried out by Red Army soldiers see, for example, Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 84–98.
21. There is no agreement among historians on the exact number of Jews who perished during the pogroms. For a discussion about the estimate number of victims, see Budnitskii, "Jews, Pogroms, and the White Movement," 1. According to S. I. Gusev-Orenburgskii, the number of Jewish victims reached 100,000

(see his *Kniga o evreiskikh pogromakh na Ukraine v 1919* (Petrograd, n.d.), 14). According to the Soviet economist Yuri Larin the number was 200,000 (see *Evrei i antisemitizm v SSSR* [Moscow: Gos. izdat., 1929], 55). This same number was reported in 1932 in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (see S. Dimanshtein, "Evreiskie pogromy v Rossii," in *Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 24, ed. chief Otto Iu. Schmidt [Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe nauchnoe izdatelstvo "Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia," 1932], 148). Elias Heifetz argued that 120,000 Jews in Ukraine alone were killed during the violence; see Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 180. The data collected by the Evobshchestkom, the Soviet Jewish aid organization established in the summer of 1920, confirmed the number 200,000 but added that this amount did not include the thousands who perished as a result of wounds, venereal disease, typhus, and cholera. See Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 74–76.

22. Some of the bloodiest pogroms in Belorussia took place in the context of the Polish-Soviet war. In the summer of 1920, the Polish army carried out pogroms in Minsk, Bobruisk (Babruysk), Borisov (Barysaw), Koidanov (Dzyarzhynsk), and Slutsk. For a detailed account of a pogrom carried out in Vitebsk by the Green Army, see *Evreiskii pogromy na zavode "Novki"* (Vitebsk: Izdanie Vitebskogo Gubvoenrevkoma, 1920). On the violence perpetrated in Belorussia by the Polish army, the White Guards, and the troops of Stanislav Bulak-Balakhovich, see also Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 22–27, 41, 48, 53–55, 58–63; and L. B. Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov: pogrom na Ukraine, v Belorussii i evropeiskoi chasti Rossii v period grazhdanskoi voiny, 1918–1922* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007), 539–743.
23. Elias Tcherikower, ed., *In der tkufe fun revolutsye: memuarn, materyaln, dokumentn* (Berlin: Yidishe literarishe farlag, 1924), 1.
24. On the continuum in the cultures of violence between the pogroms and the Holocaust, see Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 112; Peter Kenez, "Pogroms and White Ideology in the Russian Civil War," in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John Doyle Kiler and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 304–11; David Cesarani, *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews, 1933–1949* (London: Macmillan, 2016), 152, 185, 366, 793.
25. On sexual violence in the civil war, see Irina Astashkevich, *Gendered Violence: Jewish Women in the Pogroms 1917 to 1921* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2018).
26. Jeffrey Veidlinger, *In the Shadow of the Shtetl: Small-Town Jewish Life in Soviet Ukraine* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 35.
27. See David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
28. See Jonathan Frankel, "'Ritual Murder' in the Modern Era: The Damascus Affair," *Jewish Social Studies* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 1–16.
29. On the Beilis Affair, see Ezekiel Leikin, ed., *The Beilis Transcripts: The Anti-Semitic Trial That Shook the World* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993); Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University

of California Press, 1986); Robert Weinberg, *The Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

30. For two remarkable examples of this approach, see Helmut Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003); and Eugene M. Avrutin, *The Velizh Affair: Blood Libel in a Russian Town* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
31. The idea of a global Jewish conspiracy became widespread during the civil war, and was popularized in the West by the thousands of anti-Bolshevik émigrés who fled the Soviets. On the conspiracy see Steven Zipperstein, *Kishinev and The Tilt of History* (New York: Liveright, 2018); see, in particular, ibid., ch. 5.
32. Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs, Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank, 1894–1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 276–79.
33. Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 23 (1978): 25–46.
34. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 208.
35. The blood allegation is linked to a tendency among Christians to project onto Jews their own metaphoric ritual consumption of the blood and body of Christ; see Gavin Langmuir, *History, Religion and Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). See also Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 203–7, 261.
36. On the intersections between blood libel and folklore, see Alan Dundes, ed., *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Antisemitic Folklore* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
37. On the question of belief in the reality of the Jewish crime of ritual murder in Russian society, see Avrutin, *Velizh Affair*, 2, 10–11, 24, 30, 136.
38. Hyman Lumer, *Lenin on the Jewish Question* (New York: International, 1974), 142.
39. Larin, *Evrei i antisemitizm v SSSR*, 7, 35.
40. See, for example, Adam Teller, "The Shtetl as an Arena for Polish-Jewish Integration in the Eighteenth Century," *Polin* 17 (2004): 25–40.
41. See David Engel, "Away from a Definition of Antisemitism: An Essay in the Semantics of Historical Description," in *Rethinking European Jewish History,* ed. Jeremy Cohen and Moshe Rosman (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2009), 30–53. For a discussion of what constitutes a pogrom see Engel, "What's in a Pogrom"; see, in particular, ibid., 21–24.
42. One exception in this trend is Andrew Sloin's study of Soviet antisemitism in the regional context of Belorussia. See Andrew Sloin, *The Jewish Revolution in Belorussia: Economy, Race and Bolshevik Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017); see, in particular, ibid., chs. 6 and 7.

43. V. Glebov, *Sovremennyi antisemitizm i borba s nim* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardia, 1927), 49, 99.
44. See, for example, "A blut-bilbl in Varshe," *Der shtern*, March 31, 1927, 3; Sem, "Mitlelter," *Oktyabr*, March 11, 1937, 3.
45. The new economic policy (NEP) of state capitalism allowed private trade and small-scale manufacturing. "NEPman" became a disparaging term for businessmen who engaged in small entrepreneurial activities and was often used to express antisemitism in disguise. Accusations that Trotsky spread "Jewish NEPmanism" (evreiskoe NEPmanstvo) and introduced the NEP policies to help his fellow Jews were not infrequent.
46. Lithuanian Special Archives (section of KGB Documents), f. 1, op. 10, d. 152, l. 137 ("Letter, 1953").

CHAPTER 1

1. Kenez, "Pogroms and White Ideology," 293.
2. For instances of similar ethnographies of violence in different geopolitical contexts, see Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
3. The memory of life and death in Dubovo was preserved thanks to the work of Rachel Faygnberg. A survivor herself, who fled the pogroms with her infant son and took refuge in different towns in the Odessa region, Faygnberg was the only woman to collaborate closely with historian Elias Tcherikower in his effort to chronicle anti-Jewish violence during the civil war. For Faygnberg's detailed accounts of the destruction of Dubovo, see YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, Elias Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 235, pp. 21708–801 (hereafter Tcherikower Collection) ("Khurbn Dubove, a pinkes fun a toyter shtot"—sent to Tcherikower in Berlin, on July 3, 1922). See also Rachel Faygnberg, *A pinkes fun a toyter shtot (khurbn Dubove)* (Warsaw: Akhisefer, 1926), and the Russian translation by Saul Ginzburg, *Letopis mertvogo goroda* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1928). Her detailed account was used as evidence during the 1927 Schwarzbard trial.
4. According to the 1897 census, there were 1,104 Jews living then in Dubovo. In 1918, there were 1,250 Jews in Dubovo, making up approximately 40 percent of the town's inhabitants. See Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 12. According to the data collected by the All-Ukrainian Relief Committee for the Victims of Pogroms and the Red Cross, there were 1,000 Jews living in Dubovo in 1918, and approximately 3,000 non-Jews, mostly Ukrainians. See Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 341.
5. Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 23.
6. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 235, p. 21729.
7. According to the survivor, the ensuing economic crisis spurred the peasants to actively partake in the anti-Jewish violence. See Zusia Val, "Tsum yortsayt fun

Proskurover pogrom," *Di yidishe tsaytung*, February 20, 1924, in Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 521, p. 43248.

8. This is a common theme that runs through hundreds of witness accounts and testimonies collected by the Tcherikower team, by the All-Ukrainian Relief Committee for the Victims of Pogroms, and by the Red Cross. See, for example, Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 341; and Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 26.
9. Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 20–21.
10. Ibid., 29.
11. See, for example, Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
12. "Pogromy," *Kratkaia evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 6 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1976), 562–76.
13. Ibid.
14. Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 33–34.
15. Ibid., 36–48.
16. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 235, pp. 21713–14.
17. Faygnberg describes in detail the "intimacy of genocide;" see *Letopis*, 37–38. On the murder of Sonia Toshkes, who was literally torn apart by her neighbor, almost in "a Jedwabne fashion," see Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 235, pp. 21716–17; and Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 344–45.
18. Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 66.
19. See Manus I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46; Saul S. Friedman, *Pogromchik: The Assassination of Simon Petlura* (New York: Hart, 1976), 11; and Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 49.
20. Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 348.
21. See Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 235, pp. 21721–22; and Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 123–33.
22. The smaller towns in the immediate region lacked Jewish self-defense. One exception was the legendary self-defense group in the shtetl of Golovanevsk. See Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 127–28. On the Jewish self-defense movement during the civil war see Mihaly Kalman, *Shtetl Heroes: Jewish Armed Self-Defense from the Pale to Palestine, 1917–1970* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2017).
23. Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 111, 143.
24. Ibid., 133.
25. Ibid., 172–75.
26. Ibid., 179. Odessa might have been an attractive resettlement option for refugees also because of the legendary Jewish self-defense units that liberated the city from pogromists more than once.
27. Faygnberg, *Letopis,* 176. A photograph of the cemetery destroyed and sowed was preserved in the archives of the Jewish section of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities, in Moscow. See Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587, p. 50992.

28. Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 160. On the shtetl in the Soviet Union (in Belorussia in particular), see Arkadi Zeltser, *Evrei v sovetskoi provintsii: Vitebsk i mestechki, 1917–1941* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006); Leonid Smilovitsky, *Evrei v Turove: istoriia mestechka Mozyrskogo Polesiia* (Jerusalem: Tsur-Ot Press, 2008); and Albert Kaganovich, *The Long Life and Death of Jewish Rechitsa: A Community in Belarus, 1625–2000* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).
29. A sizeable proportion of shtetl literature studies the Jewish town in Eastern Europe by focusing on the two political systems (the Soviet and the Nazi one) that brought an end to its existence. A case in point is the recent study by Yehuda Bauer, in which the author examines the fate of the East European shtetl obliterated during the Holocaust. Bauer does remind us of the role played by the Bolshevik regime in destroying the shtetl in Soviet Belorussia and Soviet Ukraine, forcing its Jews to migrate to larger cities in search of jobs. See Bauer, *Death of the Shtetl*, 5.
30. On anti-Jewish violence in Belorussia see also Evobshchestkom, *Pogromy, uchinennye belopoliakami: ofitsialnye dokumenty, obsledovaniia, i svidetelskie pokazania* (Moscow: b.i., 1921).
31. In the 1880s, most instances of anti-Jewish violence took place in shtetls and smaller towns. While not all the pogroms of 1903–5 occurred in the cities, the ones that occurred in smaller towns received less attention and press coverage. This is one of the reasons why the pogroms of 1919, during which the extreme and systematic violence remained largely circumscribed to smaller towns, became a "forgotten genocide."
32. Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between Reds and Whites*, 771. In his deposition in court, during the 1926 Schwarzbard trial, Tcherikower stated the following: "I was in Ukraine during the military government of Petliura, and as a historian I have closely studied the question of the pogroms. I believe Petliura is responsible for the pogroms because we have never been able to obtain sanctions against the officers who organized pogroms against the Jews. Revutski, minister of Jewish Affairs at the Directory, told me once that Petliura had said . . . that the pogroms were necessary to maintain the Cossacks' discipline. During the massacres in Zhitomir a delegation of the municipality turned to Petliura [for help] . . ., but he refused to see them and the massacres continued." See Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vishikh organiv vladi ta upravlinnia Ukrainy (hereafter TsDAVOU), f. 4, op. 1, d. 2, l. 121, "Deposition of Tcherikower at the Schwarzbard Trial." On the role of Petliura in the pogroms of the civil war see David Engel, ed., *The Assassination of Symon Petliura and the Trial of Scholem Schwarzbard, 1926–1927: A Selection of Documents* (Archive of Jewish History and Culture, vol. 2) (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).
33. Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogormy*, 14.
34. See Comité des delegations juives, *The Pogroms in the Ukraine Under the Ukrainian Governments (1917–1920): Historical Survey with Documents and Photographs* (London: J. Bale and Danielsson, 1927), 90.

35. Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 6; for rape statistics in Belorussia, see 55.
36. Ibid., 65–66.
37. *Pogroms in the Ukraine*, 90–91.
38. Ibid., 91.
39. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 456, p. 38265 (Resolution of the Kamenets Ukrainian and Jewish socialist party organizations, June 22, 1919). From June to November 1919, Kamenets-Podolsk served as the capital of the Ukrainian People's Republic.
40. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 454, p. 47373 (*Komunistishe fon*, April 18, 1919).
41. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 64, pp. 4970–71 (A. Chomskii, "My Trial").
42. See, for example, Mariia I. Frumkina (Ester), *Doloi ravvinov* (Moscow: Krasnaia Nov, 1923), 13.
43. Some Zionist groups, in particular Poale-Tsion, attempted to integrate the alliance with the Soviet state and their goal of building a new home in the Land of Israel. On Zionist activity in Soviet Russia in the 1920s see Ziva Galili, "The Soviet Experience of Zionism: Importing Soviet Political Culture to Palestine," *Journal of Israeli History, Politics, Society, Culture* 24, no. 1 (2005): 1–33; and Ziva Galili and Boris Morozov, *Exiled to Palestine: The Emigration of Soviet Zionist Convicts, 1924–1934* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
44. Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 180–88.
45. Kenez "Pogroms and White Ideology," 294–95.
46. As Kenez argues, "No theme of White propaganda hurt the enemy more than the association of Jews and Bolsheviks." To be sure, encouraged by White propaganda many Russians and Ukrainians chose antisemitism and chose the Whites. "The Bolsheviks did win, but in spite of the antisemitism of the people." See Kenez, *Defeat of the Whites*, 177.
47. Tcherikower, *In der tkufe fun revolutsye*, 211.
48. Ibid., 212–3. For the full autobiographical account of Chomskii's arrest and trial see Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 64, pp. 4969–5133 (A. Chomskii, "My Trial").
49. Ibid., 5016.
50. Abramson, *Prayer for the Government*, 150.
51. Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collége de France, 1975–1976*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), 69. I thank Olga Bertelsen for this reference.
52. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Kyivskoi oblastyi (hereafter GAKO), f. 3050, op. 1, d. 225, l. 31 (testimony by Chana Ayvrum-Berovoi Gozman).
53. Mendl Osherovich, *Shtet un shtetlekh in Ukrayne un in andere teyln fun Rusland: forshung in yidisher geshikhte un yidishn lebnsshteyger*, vol. 1 (New York: 1948), 35.
54. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 735, p. 62310 (petition to the People's Commissar of Justice, 1922). The workers addressed their request to turn the synagogue into a club to the Moscow Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies.

55. Ibid., p. 62306.
56. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 735, pp. 62307–62307 ob.
57. Ibid., p. 62309.
58. Ibid., pp. 62309–62309 ob.
59. TsDAVOU, f. 413, op. 1, del. 10, ll. 63–64 (Report about the activity of the Central Commission of National Minorities of the VUTsIK, 1925–26). On the role of central authorities in hindering the antisemitism of local authorities, see also TsDAVOU, f. 413, op. 1, del. 10, l. 92 (Report on the activity of the Central Commission of National Minorities of the VUTsIK 1924–25).
60. Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between Reds and Whites*, 258; and Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 175–79.
61. TsDAVOU, f. p-5, op. 1, d. 1835, l. 4 (Memorandum).
62. Ibid., ll. 8–9 (Telegrams).
63. Enacted on May 15, 1882, the so-called May Laws were temporary measures restricting Jewish settlement, real estate, and business transactions. These laws remained in effect for more than thirty years.
64. TsDAVOU, f. p-5, op. 1, d. 1835, l. 6 (NKVD, Deliberation).
65. From Rachel Faygnberg's *Untern hamer* (*Under the Hammer*). Originally written in 1919, in Yiddish, the manuscript never appeared in the original but was published in Hebrew in 1924, under the title *Be-yeme zaam* (*In the Days of Fury*), the same title used by Chaiym N. Bialik for his pogrom poems. In the account, Faygnberg described her experiences as a refugee during the pogroms, in particular while in hiding in the shtetl of Baranova—in the Odessa region—and while fleeing toward the Romanian border. I thank Nurit Orchan for sharing this information with me.
66. Georgette Bennett and Leonard Polonsky Digitized JDC Text Archive, JDC Archives, Records of the New York Office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921–32, fol. 496, Report on Fastov, Kiev Gubernia, 6/29/1923, p. 1.
67. For a discussion of the number of victims of the Fastov pogrom, see A. A. Nemirovskii, "K voprosu o chisle zhertv evreiskikh pogromov v Fastove i Kieve," *Novyi istoricheskii vestnik* 14, no. 1 (2006), http://www.nivestnik.ru/2006_1/4.shtml#_edn35. According to Gusev-Orenburgskii the number of victims reached 2,000. See S. I. Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga. Pogromy 1919–1920 gg. na Ukraine* (Harbin: DEKOPO, 1922), 211. On the Fastov pogrom, including an image of the marketplace razed to the ground, see Ostrovskii, *Evreiksie pogromy*, 51 (here, the number of victims recorded is 1,800).
68. JDC Archives, fol. 496, Report on Fastov, pp. 1–3.
69. JDC Archives, Report, p. 2. On the Fastov pogrom, see Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 241–55.
70. While the degree of violence and the intensity of the killing stand out in the context of the pogrom in Fastov, Jewish life did not come to an end here as happened in other shtetls, where most Jews were killed or fled. In fact, Jews continued to live in Fastov after the pogrom. In 1930, for example, as part of the industrialization

campaign launched throughout the USSR, Soviet authorities confiscated five matzah baking machines in the town to be donated to the industrialization fund and used to purchase tractors. See "Soviets Confiscate Jewish Ritual Objects for Junk," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, February 18, 1930.

71. On the use of rape as an instrument of genocidal violence in the context of the pogroms, see Elissa Bemporad, "Memory, Body, and Power: Women and the Study of Genocide," in *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, ed. Elissa Bemporad and Joyce Warren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018). For a discussion of the nature of genocidal rape see Debra B. Bergoffen, *Contesting the Politics of Genocidal Rape: Affirming the Dignity of the Vulnerable Body* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
72. Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1923), 208–10.
73. Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, "From the Report of the Plenipotentiary in the Uman Region, about the Pogroms in the City, 5 July, 1919," 125. The witness accounts that testify the degree of participation by neighbors in the anti-Jewish violence are numerous. See, for example, GAKO, f. 3050, d. 225, l. 20 (May 3, 1921, Letter by the ORT representative in Ovruch to the Kiev Commission to help victims of pogroms); and GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 127, l. 77 (Protocols, December 2, 1921: The Revolutionary Tribunal sentenced that during the Kamennyi Brodskii pogrom a large number of "local *kulaki*" participated in the anti-Jewish violence.)
74. Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, "From the Report of the Plenipotentiary in the Uman Region, about the Pogroms in the City, 5 July, 1919," 125.
75. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 522, l. 119 (Memorandum, May 15, 1923). It should be noted, however, that a clause was added and specifically limited the legal restitution of property to those Jews "who did not belong to the working class." As one document clearly stated, "each citizen must obtain the restoration of their rights in the legal institutions," before applying for property restitution. This implied that *lishchentsy* had no access to this legal right. See GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 522, l. 126 (Letter, May 13, 1923).
76. On the question of restitution and property transaction annulment see "Yuridishe hilf far pogromirte," *Der emes*, July 6, 1923.
77. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 522, l. 119.
78. See also Arkadi Zeltser, "Ethnic Conflict and Modernization in the Interwar Period: The Case of Soviet Belorussia," in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom,* ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Natan Meir, and Israel Bartal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 174–85.
79. See Elissa Bemporad, "Empowerment, Defiance and Demise: Jews and the Blood Libel Specter Under Stalinism," *Jewish History* 26, no. 3 (December 2012): 343–61. See also Zeev Levin, *Collectivization and Social Engineering: Soviet Administration and the Jews of Uzbekistan, 1917–1939* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic, 2015), 52–53.

80. On anti-Jewish violence and systematic expulsions of Jews on the Eastern Front during World War I, see Polly Zavadivker, ed., *1915 Diary of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Writer at the Eastern Front* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); and Polly Zavadivker, *Blood and Ink: Jewish Chroniclers of Catastrophe in Twentieth Century Russia* (PhD diss., University of California of Santa Cruz, 2013).
81. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter USHMM), RG 31.057, reel 19, p. 99 ("Program to collect materials on the pogroms, 17/1/1922") (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, l. 52.)
82. On the mass exodus from shtetls and cities across Ukraine and Belorussia see Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 73–74. On the effect of the pogroms on Jewish colonies see Sh. Dimanshtein, ed. *Yidn in fssr: zamlbukh* (Moscow: Emes. No der, 1935), 20.
83. On the Proskurov pogrom, see *Khurbn Proskurov: tsum ondenken fun di heylike neshomes vos zaynen umgekumen in der shreklekher shkhite vos iz ongefirt gevorn fun di Haydamakes* (New York: Levant Press, 1924).
84. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2785, ll. 4, 5 (Materials about the question of studying the problem of the shtetl population in the district of Proskurov, 1928).
85. Ibid., l. 6. Throughout the district the Jewish population fell from 12% to 8%. To take one example from the Proskurov district, in 1897 there were 9,042 Jews living in the shtetl of Letichev; in 1913, there were 10,989 Jews; in 1920, 8,666, and in 1926, 7,158.
86. Rape legitimizes murder as it creates a community of perpetrators who bond together through sexual violence: shame and disgust turn the victims into "whores," and the raped women are made into accomplices in the rape itself. Debra Bergoffen writes as follows: "the genocidal rapes served two functions: the widely noted function of destroying a people from within, and the little noticed function of legitimating the genocide in the eyes of the perpetrators. In the first case the shame of rape transforms women's birthing bodies from the source of their peoples' biological future into a mark of their death. As polluted, the women's role as nurturers of the next generation and anchors of their people's moral dignity is ruined." Debra Bergoffen, "The Genocidal Politics of Rape, Shame and Disgust" (Paper presented, at the conference *War and Sexual Violence*, The CUNY Graduate Center, April 28–29, 2016). On intersectionality in the context of genocidal rape, see Sherrie L. Russell-Brown, "Rape as an Act of Genocide," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 21, no. 2 (2003): 350–74.
87. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2785, l. 8 (Materials about the question of studying the problem of the shtetl population in the district of Proskurov, 1928). The average birth rate for women of all nationalities amounted to 135.7.
88. "Examination records by medical personnel of the pogrom victims in Cherkassy, December 1919," in Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 355.

89. Because of the biological nature of the female body and their ability to procreate, women are consistently targeted for sexualized violence during war and genocide. This form of violence often becomes the first stage for the annihilation of the enemy group. Women's bodies are turned into the space where the genocidal project of eradicating the social pollution produced by the alleged enemy group is implemented. By breaking down moral order and kinship structure, mass rape serves as an instrument of ethnic cleansing. See Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide*, in particular, "Memory, Body, and Power."
90. According to the available data on Jewish refugees who fled to Odessa, 80% expressed the desire to emigrate (60% to America and 20% to Palestine), while 12% wished to remain in Odessa. Since by 1921 emigration was not the easy way out, presumably the majority decided to resettle elsewhere in Soviet cities and the number of those who chose to remain in Odessa grew. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587, p. 51007, "Exhibition."
91. The alliance was based on a reciprocity of interests: while during the Middle Ages the king had mostly sought after the Jews' economic utility, under the Soviets the alliance was based on their political utility. In both contexts, their higher level of education, made Jews the ultimate ally to fill out administrative and managerial positions
92. There is a tight relationship between trauma and place wherever genocidal violence occurs. Survivors of the genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda, for example, lamented that "there was nowhere to go," voicing the desire to leave the places and spaces where the killing occurred. In the newly established Soviet Union, Jews could move away, and leave the Pale of Settlement, where most pogroms had taken place. On trauma and place see Aleida Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Postwar Identity*, trans. Sarah Clift (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).
93. Goldman, *My Disillusionment*, 210.
94. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books), 23–50.

CHAPTER 2

1. See, for example, DAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 37, l. 79 ("Ritual murder" flier). See also APPO Leningradskogo oblastkoma VKP(b), *Na borbu s antisemitizmom: materialy dlia agitatorov i besedchikov* (Leningrad: APPO Len. obk., 1929), 28; here, in one of the instructions distributed to the supporters of the White movement, pogrom instigators are encouraged to exploit rumors about ritual murder to secure local support against the Jews.
2. For a reference to blood libel rumors used to incite the participation in the pogroms of the civil war, see Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, *Krovavyi navet na khristian* (Petrograd: Zhizn i znanie, 1918); see, in particular, ibid., v–xvi.

3. Ibid., xiii.
4. See DAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 37, l. 45 ("Brothers"; and appeal by the Rovenky military chaplaincy). On religiously based anti-Jewish propaganda carried out in Obodivko, see Osherovich, *Shtet un shtetlekh in Ukraine*, 36.
5. See Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, *Znamenie vremeni: ubiistvo Andreia Iushchinskogo i delo Beilisa. Vpechatleniia kievskogo protsessa* (St. Peterburg: Zhizn i znanie, 1914).
6. Iurii Morozov and Tatiana Derevianko, *Evreiskie kinematografisty v Ukraine, 1910–1945* (Kiev: Dukh i litera, 2004), 61. See also V. Ivanova, *Velikii kinemo: katalog sokhranivshikhsia igrovykh filmov v Rossii: 1908–1919* (Petersburg: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), 370; and Irina Mak, "Sledstvie vedet rezhisser: delo Beilisa v kino," *Lekhaim* 7, no. 255 (July 2013): 122–23.
7. I. S. Smirnov, ed. *Samoe vazhnoe iz vsekh iskusstv: Lenin o kino* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1963); see 11, 140, 165. While in Cracow, Lenin saw a Beilis film directed before the Revolution, with his wife Nadezhda Krupskaia. The Russian patriot and Duma member, Georgy Zamyslovskii, an apologist for the blood libel and the White movement, published in 1917 a study on the Kiev trial, accusing the Jews of ritual murder. Issued before the Bolsheviks came to power, the book was secretly sponsored by the Police Department. See Georgy G. Zamyslovskii, *Ubiistvo Andreia Iushchinskogo* (Petrograd: Novoe vremia, 1917).
8. Bonch-Bruevich, *Krovavyi navet*, xii–xiii. To show the danger and foolishness of the blood libel, Bonch-Bruevich included a discussion of ritual murder accusations against Christian sects in Russia. In the 1890s, for example, a group of Votyak (Udmurt) peasants in the village of Stary Multan, faced the accusation of carrying out human sacrifice for religious purposes. Thanks to the efforts of Russian writer Vladimir Korolenko, a re-trial followed the first trial which had resulted in a "guilty" verdict. The Votyak peasants were eventually acquitted. On the Multan case see Marina Mogilner, "Human Sacrifice in the Name of a Nation: The Religion of Common Blood," in *Ritual Murder in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Beyond: New Histories of an Old Accusation*, ed. Eugene M. Avrutin, Jonathan Dekel-Chen, and Robert Weinberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 130–50.
9. Bonch-Bruevich, *Krovavyi navet*, 13.
10. L. Liadov, *O vrazhde k evreiam* (Moscow: Mosskovskii rabochii, 1927), 11; G. Ledat, *Antisemitizm i antisemity: voprosy i otvety* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1929), 31. See also Alexander Tager, *The Decay of Czarism: the Beilis Trial* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1935), 249, and Maurice Samuel, *Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beilis Case* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), 225–26, 254.
11. "Revolutsionnyi tribunal: delo Vippera," *Izvestiia*, September 18, 1919, 4.
12. For the complete transcripts of the trial against Vipper see the Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People (hereafter CAHJP), HM3/288.06 (Protocols of the meeting of the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal on the Case of Oskar Iurevich Vipper, September 18–19, 1919) (microfilm from GARF, f. 296, op. 3, d. 17); see, in particular, ibid., p. 6.

13. Ibid., p. 20.
14. Ibid., pp. 4–7.
15. See ibid., pp. 9–11, 18–19. "It seems to me," declared Vipper, that "American, German, and French capital is concentrated primarily in Jewish hands." During the trial, Krylenko read out loud excerpts from Vipper's closing remarks at the Beilis trial. These included comments on the fear of alleged international Jewish power: "I feel impelled to say openly that I find myself under Jewish domination and that I am weighted down by the power of . . . the Jewish press. The Russian press is only marginally Russian. Having monopolized the press, they've become so arrogant as to believe that no one will dare level such an accusation against them, not only in Russia but in any other country as well . . . they have the wealth . . . they are in fact the rulers of our universe. . . . What is not fictitious, but a matter of historic record, is that ritual murders did occur and the circumstance in those cases strongly resembled some of the features of the case before us."
16. Ibid., p. 22. Vipper's defense lawyer presented a copy of Bonch-Bruevich's book on the blood libel as evidence. Vipper justified his belief in the plausibility of the accusation also by referring to ritual murder practiced by other sects, including Christian sects such as the Skoptsy and the Khlysty.
17. Ibid., pp. 8–9 (Transcripts from the second day of the trial). Vipper referred here to the well-known 1899 case in Polna and the 1901 Konitz case tried in modern European states. He also mentioned the existence of blood accusations against Gypsies.
18. Ibid., pp. 12–13, 21 (Transcripts from the second day of the trial). Krylenko also drew a comparison between widespread notions of Gypsies as impure and as potential perpetrators of ritual murder.
19. Ibid., pp. 22–24 (Transcripts from the second day of the trial). See also "Revolutsionnyi tribunal: delo Vippera," *Izvestiia*, September 18, 1919, 2.
20. "Revolutsionnyi tribunal: delo Vippera," *Izvestiia*, September 20, 1919, 3.
21. USHMM, RG 31.026M (selected records from TsDAGOU, Komsomol), reel 83, pp. 736–737 (GPU Report, About the Antisemitism of the Clergy, 1926) (TsDAGOU, f. 7, op. 1, d. 165, ll. 35–36).
22. *Revoliutsiia i tserkov: ezhemesiachnyi zhurnal* 5, no. 68 (1919): 75.
23. *Sviatoi otrok Gavriil: Srednevekovaia Beilisiada* (Moscow: Ateist, 1922).
24. On anti-religious campaigns against Russian Orthodoxy, see William B. Husband, *"Godless Communists": Atheism and Society in Soviet Russia, 1917–1932* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000); Robert H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars: Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); and Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).
25. USHMM, RG 31.026M, reel 83, p. 736.
26. Ibid., 737.
27. Yuri Sandormirskii, *Puti antisemitizma v Rossii* (Moscow: Gosudarstevnnoe izdatelstvo, 1928), 30. For a detailed analysis of the Moscow case, see Gennady

Estraikh, "Simulating Justice: The Blood Libel Case in Moscow, April 1922," in *Ritual Murder in Russia, Eastern Europe and Beyond: New Histories of an Old Accusation*, ed. Eugene M. Avrutin, Jonathan Dekel-Chen, and Robert Weinberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 204–19

28. Sandormirskii, *Puti antisemitizma*, 30–31.
29. Ibid., 31. It is telling that the author of the report only mentioned this case of blood libel, while he remained silent about other instances that occurred in the mid-1920s which involved Soviet authorities; see below.
30. Ibid.
31. "A durkhgefalener blut-bilbl," *Der emes*, March 28, 1926, 4. See also "Blood-Ritual Libel Is Attempted by Woman," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 2, 1926.
32. Tcherikower Collection, RG 89, fol. 982, pp. 75240–351 (Meeting transcripts, Commission for Investigating Blood Libel Materials, December 1919–December 1920).
33. On the history of the commission and its members, see Simon M. Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni: materiali dlia istorii moego vremeni: vospominaniia i razmyshleniia* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 1998); and Genrikh Sliozberg, *Delo minuvshikh dnei: zapiski russkogo evreia* (Paris: Imprimerie Pascal, 1934).
34. A distinguished member of the "St. Petersburg school" of Russian historiography, Sergei Platonov was admitted to the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1909. Even though he never embraced Marxism, he played a leading role in the Archaeographic Commission and the Academy's library until 1928. On Platonov's life and work see A. I. Dvornichenko and S. O. Shmidt, eds., *Pamiati akademika Sergeia Fedorovicha Platonova: issledovaniia i materialy* (St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2011).
35. See Viktor E. Kelner, "Dubnow, Platonov i drugie" (Komissia dlia nauchnogo izdania dokumentov ritualnykh protsessov v Rossii. Petrograd, 1919–1920 gg.), in *Ocherki po istorii russko-evreiskogo knizhnogo dela vo vtoroi polovine XIX—nachale XXv*, ed. I. I. Frolov (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia natsionalnaia biblioteka, 2003), 186–221. For information on the secretaries and archivists involved in the commission; on Sliozberg, a jurist well-versed in the legal status of Jews; on Krasny-Admony, a lawyer and a knowledgeable scholar in Jewish studies, who served as head of the biblical section of the Jewish Encyclopedia; and on Jewish historian Israel Sosis, who participated in the commission's bibliographical subdivision, see, in particular, ibid., 186–88.
36. The findings of the 1857 commission established by Tsar Alexander II to investigate the blood libel, which included the participation of Daniel Khvolson (a converted Jew on the faculty of the Saint Petersburg Theological Seminary), were not intended for the public. The investigation's results were mixed: if Khvolson refuted the allegation, Ukrainian historian Nikolai Kostomarov believed in it until the end of his life. On the 1857 commission, see Daniel A. Khvolson, *O nekotorikh srednevekovikh obvineniakh protiv evreev* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Tsederbauma i Goldenbliuma, 1880).

37. The one historian who before the revolution received permission from the Ministry of Justice to work in the Senate archive was Iulii Gessen, who as a result accessed some classified records.
38. Belief in the blood libel was not on the fringes, but could emerge in the work of prominent political and cultural figures in tsarist Russia. In general, the blood libel legend had become a relatively respectable belief in late nineteenth-century Russia, endorsed, for example, by writers Fedor Dostoevsky and Vasily Rozanov, among others. See, for example, Harriet Murav, "The Predatory Jew and Russian Vitalism: Dostoevsky, Rozanov, and Babel," in *Ritual Murder in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Beyond: New Histories of an Old Accusation*, ed. Eugene M. Avrutin, Jonathan Dekel-Chen, and Robert Weinberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 151–71.
39. Kelner, "Dubnov, Platonov i drugie," 186–221.
40. Tcherikower Collection, RG 89, fol. 982, p. 75299. See Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni*, 439; and V. G. Bukhert, "S. F. Platonov v Komissii dlia nauchnogo izdaniia dokumentov ritualnykh protsessov v Rossii Narodnogo komissariata prosveshcheniia RSFSR (1919–1920)," in *Pamiati akademika Sergeia Fedorovicha Platonova*, ed. A. I. Dvornichenko and S. O. Shmidt (St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2011), 120, 119–30.
41. Tcherikower Collection, RG 89, fol. 982, p. 75300; and Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni*, 439.
42. Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni*, 452. Dubnow recorded a conversation with archeologist Druzhinin that took place following the commission's first meeting, in which the Russian professor mentioned the alleged words of Baron David Ginzburg: "Who knows! It might be that a fanatic and unknown sect among the Jews commits ritual murder."
43. Tcherikower Collection, RG 89, fol. 982, p. 75280.
44. Ibid., p. 75298.
45. Ibid., p. 75296.
46. Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni*, 436; G. B. Sliozberg, *Delo minuvshikh dnei: zapiski russkogo evreia*, vol. 3 (Paris: Imprimerie Pascal, 1934), 21. Russian archivist Blinov encouraged the Jewish scholars to approach the question dispassionately; see Tcherikower Collection, RG 89, fol. 982, p. 75286.
47. A reference to the existence of a larger commission on pogroms and blood libels appeared in 1926; see "Fifteen Families, Survivors of Petlura Pogrom, Eager to Testify for Schwarzbard," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 27, 1926. According to Dubnow, who left Soviet Russia in 1921, the commission was never established; see Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni*, 452.
48. On the proposal to establish an Institute for the Research of the History and Culture of the Jews, which would centralize all Jewish scholarly organizations, commissions, and universities, under the patronage of the Evsektsiia (in the person of Moshe Litvakov) and the Narkomnat, see Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni*, 448; Kelner, "Dubnov, Platonov i drugie," 125–26; and Tcherikower Collection, RG 89, fol. 982,

pp. 75350–54. Litvakov argued that Petrograd boasted too many different Jewish research institutions of which he doubted the scholarly seriousness.

49. D. Zaslavskii, "Po tu storonu," *Tribuna* 1, no. 11 (June1929): 12.
50. On the blood libel through Soviet eyes, see, for example, G. L. Zhigalin, *Prokliatoe nasledie (ob antisemitisme)*, 12, 21, 34–35, 42, 53, 66; and Liadov, *O vrazhde k evreiam*, 10. For a short reference to the blood libel in the context of Soviet Jewish schools, see the sixth-grade curriculum in *Program far gezelshaftkentenish in di yidishe zibnyorike shuln* (Minsk: Folkombild fun vaysrusland, 1928), 16.
51. "Protiv krovavogo naleta (doklad A. S. Zarudnego)," *Izvestiia*, January 17, 1924, 6.
52. See Sandormirskii, *Puti antisemitizma*, 5–6, 23. See, for example, I. Galant, *Dva ritualnikh protsessa: po aktam Kievskogo tsentralnogo arkhiva* (Kiev: Tip. Kiev pechat, 1924), 4: "In the course of the seven past years [since 1917] we have not even noticed one attempt to stir such accusations, which . . . confirms that ritual murder cases can emerge only where the state has an interest in them."
53. N. Rumiantsev, "Krovaviy navet na khristian i evreev," *Bezbozhnik u stanka* 6 (March 1931): 7–8. Here, the author provides a detailed history of ritual murder and the socio-economic context that led to outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence as a result of the accusation; he also reminds the readers that Christians themselves had been victims of similar accusations as early as the fifth century.
54. A. Dmitrev, *Krovavyi navet i khristianskaia tserkov* (Moscow: Gos. izdat., 1932).
55. M. Gorev, *Protiv antisemitov: ocherki i zarisovki* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gos. izdat., 1928), 12–13, 21, 68, 167–68. On the alleged infiltration of counter-revolutionary church-goers, monks, and former tsarist policemen in the Party cell of the paper factory in Dobrushin, Gomel, who actively persecuted Jewish workers, see G. Grigorev, "Dobrushin dlia Dobrushan," *Izvestiia,* January 25, 1929, 2.
56. L. Pit, "Tov. Semashko daet otpor antisemitam," *Tribuna* 1, no. 32 (1929): 17–18.
57. According to Larin, the 1922 Moscow case did not fall into the category of blood libel because of the absence of ensuing violence.
58. Larin, *Evrei i antisemitizm*, 127.
59. Ibid., 130–33. See also Mordechai Altshuler, *Yehudei Mizrah Kavkaz: toledot ha-yehudim hahareriim me-reshit ha-meah ha-teshah esreh* (Jerusalem: Mekhon Ben-Tsevi le-heker kehilot Yisrael ba-Mizrah; Makhon le-Yahadut zemanenu, ha-Universitah ha-Ivrit bi-Yerushalayim, 1990), 105–6.
60. "Ritual Murder Tale Spread," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 16, 1929. For a second case of blood libel that same year, see "Soviet Editors, Fighting Anti-Semitism, Receive Threatening Letters," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 27, 1929.
61. L. M. Kantor, *Tuzemnye evrei v Uzbekistane* (Samarkand: Uzbek. gos. izdat. UzSSR, 1929), 43.
62. Ritual murder accusations against Jews had surfaced in the Muslim world before the Beilis case, during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, at the time of the Damascus Affair of 1840, and in 1879, in Kutaisi, Georgia, when nine Jewish men were accused of kidnapping and murdering a Christian girl. See *Polnyi stenografisheskii otchet Kutaisskago dela* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Tsederbauma i Goldenbliuma, 1879).

63. Semen Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," in *Tirosh: Studies in Judaica*, vol. 6, ed. M. Chlenov and K. Rempel (Moscow: Judaica Rossica, 2003), 207–217. See also Altshuler, *Yehudei Mizrah Kavkaz*, 141–42.
64. Kantor, *Tuzemnye evrei*, 44. For a detailed account of the origin of the "Bukhara Affair," see, in particular, ibid., 43–44.
65. Ibid.
66. "Ritual Murder Rumor Excited Bukhara Populace," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 4 September 4, 1928. See also Altshuler, *Yehudei Mizrah Kavkaz*, 143–44.
67. Alexander Tager, *Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Belisa* (Moscow: Ogiz, 1933). Besides a few mentions of ritual murder in early modern Poland in the work of Soviet Jewish historian Tevye Heilikman, who taught Jewish history in Moscow and was the author of *History of the Social Movement Among Jews in Poland and Russia*, very little scholarship on the blood libel appeared in the Soviet period. See Tevye Heilikman, *Geshikhte fun der gezelshaftlekher bavegung fun di yidn in poyln un rusland* (Moscow: Tsentraler farlag far di felker fun FSSR, 1926). The book appeared in Russian translation as *Istoriia obshchestvennogo dvizheniia evreev v Polshe i Rossii* (Moscow: Gos. izdat., 1930).
68. Tager, *Tsarskaia Rossia*, 35.
69. Ibid., 13–14. The same chronological and geopolitical boundaries to the ritual murder accusation appear in less scholarly works by Soviet authors condemning antisemitism. See, for example, Gorev, *Protiv antisemitov*, 41, 68; and Ledat, *Antisemitizm i antisemity*, 25–26, 30–31.
70. USHMM, RG 31.026M (Selected records from TsDAGOU, Central Party Committee), reel 83, pp. 726–27, "Memorandum about manifestations of antisemitism in the city and in the village, 1926" (TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 7, d. 165, ll. 25–26). Located sixty-six miles from Tula, the town of Belyov had 238 Jewish residents.
71. Ibid., p. 726.
72. See, for example, the popular study of antisemitism in the Soviet Union, intended for the broad public, Gorev, *Protiv antisemitov*, 29.
73. For a second instance of blood libel in the province of Tula, see chapter 4 in this volume.
74. "Ritual Murder Tale Stirs Town in Ukraine," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 2, 1926; "A 'rituele' geshikhte," *Der emes*, April 16, 1926, 4; and "Di oysforshung vegn der mayse Kaniev," *Der emes*, April 30, 1926, 4.
75. "A 'rituele' geshikhte," *Der emes*, April 16, 1926, 4. A pogrom took place in Kaniev in December 1917, carried out by the Cossacks. This memory of violence might have played out years later in the context of the blood libel accusation of 1926. On the pogrom in Kaniev see, for example, Elias Tcherikower, *Antisemitizm i pogromy na Ukraine 1917–1918 gg* (Berlin: "Ostjudisches historisches archiv," 1923), 104–5.
76. "Di oysforshung vegn der mayse Kaniev," *Der emes*, April 30, 1926, 4.
77. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2310, l. 36 ("Report by Tkachenko, April 16, 1926").

78. Lamed, "Blut af matse: vi azoy der rikhter Kazitski mishpet antisemitizm," *Der shtern*, April 6, 1929, 4; and "Sentence Soviet Official for Blood Ritual Libel," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 14, 1929.
79. Lamed, "Blut af matse."
80. Ol., "Primirenstvu do antisemitizmu treba vikoriniti," *Robitnik poltavshini*, April 2, 1929, 4.
81. Lamed, "Blut af matse."
82. "Sentence Soviet Official for Blood Ritual Libel," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 14, 1929.
83. The subject of ritual murder in Poland during the first three decades of the twentieth century has not been widely researched. On the antisemitic literature published in Poland by Catholic institutions in the 1930s see, for example, Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism, Poland 1933–1939* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1994, published for Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem); see, in particular, ibid., 191–212. On antisemitism in modern and contemporary Poland, see Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatning Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).
84. "Still Blood-Libel in Poland: Taught to School Children as Fact," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, September 12, 1931. For other instances of ritual murder accusations in Poland see, for example, "Shir a blut-bilbl in a dorf nebn Mezritsh," *Haynt*, April 8, 1929, 4; and David Lazer, "Der tsveyter alilas-dam in Kroke," *Haynt*, November 23, 1931, 4
85. See "Still Blood-Libel in Poland," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.
86. "Teaches Ritual Murder Tale, to Be Tried by Cheka," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 30, 1928. In a similar instance that took place in Soviet school no. 67 in Leningrad, the social studies teacher openly declared that the Beilis case served as evidence for the truth that Jews used Christian blood. When one of the students reminded the teacher that Beilis had in fact been acquitted, she replied that the legal case was corrupted. See APPO Leningradskogo, *Na borbu s antisemitizmom*, 18–19.
87. See, for example, "A blut-bilbl in Varshe," *Der shtern*, March 31, 1927, 3; and Sem, "Mitlelter," *Oktyabr*, March 11, 1937, 3. For the more general discussion of antisemitic outbreaks in "fascist" Poland, and reference to pogroms and their Jewish victims, see, for example, Kazimir Grudnevskii, "Polskii fashizm v triasine vnutrennikh protivorechii," *Pravda*, August 2, 1937, 3–4.
88. In some cases, arguably in minor Jewish demographic centers, Jews even concealed their identity, alarmed that the mere public acknowledgement of their nationality (and their Yiddish mother tongue) could trigger against them accusations of chauvinism. See, for example, P. Z-skii, "Evrei na Urale," *Evreiskaia Tribuna* 4, no. 5 (June–July 1927): 39. According to this report the 1927 data of 3,952 Jews living in Sverdlovsk was erroneous precisely because Jews hid their identity fearing accusations of "Jewish nationalism."

89. Hersh Smoliar, *Fun ineveynik: zikhroynes vegn der "Yevsektsye"* (Tel Aviv, Israel: Y. L. Peretz, 1978).
90. See Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 207.
91. M. Levitan, "Untern druk funem yidishn natsionalizm (tsu der frage vegn kamf kegn der rekhter gefar in der yiddisher svive)," *Der shtern*, January 5, 1929, 2.
92. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2310, l. 36 ("Report by Tkachenko," April 16, 1926).
93. TsDAVOU, f. 413, op. 1, d. 10, l. 8 ("Report about the activity of the Central Commission on National Minorities, VUTsIK, 1925–26").
94. Mak, "Sledstvie vedet rezhisser: delo beilisa v kino," 122–3.
95. See Derek Spring and Richard Tylor, eds., *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), 140 and footnote 13.
96. For the original manuscript of Kahan's novel, see Tsentralniy derzhavniy arkhiv-muzei literaturi i mistetstva Ukraini (TsDAMLM Ukraini), f. 767, op. 1, d. 30, ll. 1–671 (Manuscript, *Peshera i sovest*), and d. 32, ll. 1–100 (Chapters of the novel *Prestuplenie i sovest, Farbrekhn un gevisn*).
97. Kahan's novel about the Beilis case was published in Yiddish in *Sovetish Heymland*, 9–11 (1965–67), but it appeared in Russian only in 1990.
98. On tactics adopted by the Jewish community to intercede in instances of ritual murder accusations during the pre-revolutionary years, see, for example, Darius Staliunas, *Enemies for a Day: Antisemitism and Anti-Jewish Violence in Lithuania under the Tsars* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015), 47–51, 59–61. See also Klaus Richter, *Antisemitismus in Litauen. Juden, Christen und die "Emanzipation" der Bauern (1889–1914)* (Berlin: Metropol, 2012).

CHAPTER 3

1. USHMM, RG 31.026M, reel 83, p. 703 (TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 1, d. 165, l. 2, excerpts from a Memorandum on Antisemitism, 1926). On the pogrom in Obodivko see M. Osherovich, *Shtet un shtetlekh in Ukraine un in andere teyln fun Rusland: forshung in yidisher geshikhte un yidishn lebnsshteyger*, vol. 1 (New York: M. Osherovich yubiley komitet, 1948), 35–38; and Eliezer David Rosenthal, *Megilat ha-tevah. Homer le-divrei yemei ha-peraot veha-tevah ha-yehudim be-Ukrainah, be-Rusyah ha-gedolah uve-Rusyah ha-levanah*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv: Havurah, 1927), 6.
2. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2689, ll. 34–37 (Special Report on Antisemitism in the Trostianets Regional Soviet Apparatus, Tulchyn District, 1928).
3. Ibid., l. 34.
4. On the pogrom in Trostianets, see USHMM, RG 31.057, M. 0019. 00000090-93 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, ll. 47–48, "Memorandum and materials about the horrible slaughter in Trostianets"); Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 19–26; Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 5; and Viktoria Khiterer, "Trostianets: istoriia odnogo mestechka," in *Shtetl yak fenomen evreiskoyi istorii: sbirnik naukovykh prats*, ed. Aronov Gelii (Kyiv: Institut Iudaiki, 1999), 85–92; "Fun yidishn lebn in di shtetlekh in Podolie," *Der emes*, June 14, 1923.

5. The Revolutionary Tribunals were established in November 1917 primarily to deal with counter-revolutionary crimes. Disbanded in 1922, they included traveling sessions that reached the provinces from Petrograd and Moscow. They tried crimes that included drunkenness, speculation, and most commonly resistance to the revolution.
6. Khiterer, "Trostianets," 88–89. According to Khiterer, most local peasants remained indifferent to the pogrom and did not attempt to rescue the Jews targeted for violence.
7. USHMM, RG 31.057, M. 0019. 00000091-92 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, ll. 47ob-48). For a detailed account of the murder, see also USHMM, RG 31.057, M. 0019. 000000116 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, l. 64, "Memorandum of the commission to help those who suffered during the pogrom in the shtetl of Trostianets, Podolia").
8. Khiterer, "Trostianets," 90.
9. During 1919 and 1920, support for the pogrom victims was mostly provided by Jewish organizations from abroad, in particular the JDC. In June 1920, the Soviets established the Evobshchestkom (also known in Yiddish as Idgezkom) to provide aid to the victims of the violence; in 1921, several other Jewish social organizations, such as EKOPO and OZE merged with the Evobshchestkom, which was still largely financed by the JDC until 1924, when it was liquidated.
10. USHMM, RG 31.057, reel 19, p. 97 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, l. 51, "Program to collect materials on the pogroms, 17/I/1922"). According to the 1897 census, 55%, or 2,421 of the 4,421 shtetl inhabitants, were Jewish. In 1939, there were 878 Jews, or 17% of the general population, living in Trostianets.
11. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2689, l. 35. Taking advantage of his position of power, and aware of the dangers that expressing such opinions in certain circles entailed, Fishenko eventually forced all Jewish factory employees to sign a document stating that he was not an antisemite.
12. Ibid., l. 35.
13. Ibid., l. 36.
14. USHMM, RG 31.057, M. 0019. 000000101 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, l. 53, "Program to collect materials on the pogroms").
15. For a discussion of the memorial, the gatherings at the Jewish cemetery to remember the victims, and the role of the pogrom in shaping local memory and identity, see Osherovich, *Shtet un shtetlekh in Ukraine*, 124–27.
16. Ibid., 125. A small grave with a tombstone was located next to the memorial. The father of a boy who had been killed during the pogrom and who was buried in the mass grave, requested to be lied to rest next to his son.
17. Ibid., 127–28.
18. I thank Natalya Lazar for sharing this information with me.
19. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587, p. 50992, "The Exhibition," Pogrom memorials erected by the sites of mass graves existed in places like Skvira, Boguslav, Proskurov, Cherkassy, Fastov, Chernigov (Chernihiv), Bratslav, Trudoliubovka, Kiev, Zhitomir, Gorodishche (Horodyshche), and many others. A pogrom memorial was erected in 1924 in the city of Proskurov, site of one of the bloodiest

pogroms of the civil war. The memorial survived World War II and was renovated after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

20. I thank Vadim Altskan for giving me the photograph of the Trostianets memorial. Dozens of Jews were buried in the Jewish cemetery, where an additional and smaller memorial was erected. See USHMM, RG 31.057, M. 0019. 000000100 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, l. 52ob, "Program to collect materials on the pogroms").
21. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 222, l. 25, "Statement to the Klevan Provincial Revolutionary Committee."
22. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 222, ll. 26–26ob, "Memorandum."
23. For a detailed analysis of Red Army soldiers' involvement in the pogroms, see Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between Reds and Whites*; see, in particular, ibid., 90–93, 99–102. Of course, the same shifting allegiences are true for the White movement. For instance, Ilia Struk, who had served with Petliura's forces, was quick to change sides: he was appointed by General Denikin head of the department of propaganda for the Volunteer Army, and signed an agreement to subordinate his troops to Denikin's command. See Viktoria Khiterer, *Jewish Pogroms in Kiev During the Russian Civil War, 1918–1920* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2015), 55.
24. Tcherikower, *In der tkufe fun revolutsye*, 382–83.
25. See Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 180–81.
26. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 225, ll. 6–6ob, "Mass shooting of Jews and retreat of Kozyr's Army."
27. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 225, ll. 21–21ob, "Indictment".
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., l. 22, "Sentence."
30. For additional examples in which the Supreme Court of Cassation endorsed the amnesty and pardoned criminals in the name of the interest of the state, see GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 225, l. 24; USHMM, RG 31.057M, 0010.0000580 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 127, l. 62, "Supreme Court decision"); and TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1907, l. 22, "Telegram."
31. GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 225, l. 26, "Indictment." See also TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2309, ll. 71–72, "To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Report on Banditry." In this 1922 report, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine discussed the reality of banditry. The Starobelskii region, for example, was controlled by at least fifteen different groups of "political bandits" by 1922, with approximately 1,500 members. After 1922, when political banditry was officially liquidated, three hundred members of these groups received amnesty, and yet—lamented the report—continued to engage in criminal activities, looting, and raiding trains; moreover, a number of these bandits joined Party institutions.
32. For specific reports from the Soviet press on the trials of counterrevolutionaries and atamany, see Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587 (The struggle against banditism and the Red courts, press reports); see, in particular, ibid., pp. 50948–51, 50975.

33. Nestor Makhno was a Ukrainian anarchist-communist revolutionary as well as the commander of the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine, a coalition of peasant bands that fought at different times with and against the Bolsheviks and the Ukraininan national forces. See Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution* (Seattle, WA: 1976). On pogroms carried out by Makhno's troops see Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 111–12, 131 and Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 85, 89, 117.
34. T. V., "Zol der hoyptgerikht entfern: vos far a veykhhartsikayt tsu banditn?," *Der shtern*, November 5, 1929, 4.
35. See, for example, USHMM, RG 31.060, M.0028, 963–68, 1029, 1078–82 "Investigative commission on pogroms in Zhitomir" (State Archives of Zhytomir Region, f. 1820, op. 5, d. 97, ll. 3–5, 44, 71–74ob).
36. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 450, p. 7.
37. Ibid., fol. 409, p. 34. On the role of women in embracing and spreading racism and anti-semitism in a different context see Kathleen M. Blee, *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
38. For Soviet press coverage of the Schwarzbard trial see, for example, Y. Lapkes, "K protsessu Shvartsbarda," *Tribuna* 6, no. 7 (1927): 21–22; "Protsess Shvartsbarda," *Izvestiia*, October 22, 1927, 2; "Protsess Shvartsbarda: burnoe zasedanie suda," *Izvestiia*, October 25, 1927, 2; Simion Mazurenko, "Petliura i petliurovshchina," *Izvestiia*, October 27, 1927; "Parizhskii prigovor," *Izvestiia*, October 29, 1927, 1. For a detailed analysis of the legacy of the trial, and its international implications for Jewish and Ukrainian politics, see Engel, *Assassination of Symon Petliura*; see, in particular, ibid., 7–98.
39. For examples of materials collected by the Jewish Committee and sent to Paris as evidence for the Schwarzbard trial, see Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 641, pp. 54842–44.
40. See ibid., fol. 357, 32621–91. See also "Ukrainian Pogrom Archives Sent to Paris by Soviet Embassy," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, September 14, 1926.
41. On the impact that the Schwarzbard trial had on Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the two émigré communities see Engel, *Assassination of Symon Petliura*, 3.
42. A similar dynamic took place some five years earlier when the trials against tsarist authorities involved in the Beilis case and punished by the Revolutionary Tribunal received extensive press coverage. The public discussion of the Beilis case unleashed animosity against the Jews in Moscow.
43. On the extreme politicization of the murder, arrest, and trial coopted by the left and by the right in France and elsewhere see Engel, *Assassination of Symon Petliura*; see, in particular, ibid., 10–22.
44. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2994, ll. 31–33 ("Additional information about the liquidation of the counter-revolutionary organization in Kiev").
45. See, for example, "Pogrom Leader Sentenced to Death by Soviet Court," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 3, 1928; "Father, Son Sentenced to Death for Pogrom

Activity," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 13, 1928; "Ukraine Pogrom Leader Is Sentenced to Death," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 12, 1928; "Protses iber dem pogrom-makher, dem Petliurovets Medinski," *Der emes*, March 16, 1928, 4.

46. A book based on the French newspapers' coverage of the Schwarzbard trial appeared in Leningrad in 1928. The introduction not only stated that "in the context of the counterrevolution in Ukraine, Petliura invented the use of the pogroms," but also confirmed that the Schwarzbard trial was in fact a trial against "the Petliurites." See I. Budovnits, ed., *Protsess Shvartsbarda v parizhskom sude* (Leningrad: Krasnaia gazeta, 1928), 3.
47. Meir Kotik, *Mishpat Schwarzbard: rotseah-nakam al reka ha-pogromim be-Ukrainah* (Israel, Haderah: Mifale neyar Haderah, 1972).
48. "15 Families, Survivors of Petliura Pogrom, Eager to Testify for Schwarzbard," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 27, 1926.
49. "Pogrom Leader Sentenced to Prison by Soviet Court," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 28, 1928.
50. "Doppak, Pogrom Leader, Apprehended in Odessa," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 6, 1928.
51. A. K., "A gerikht iber pogromtchikes un provokatorn in Polotsk," *Oktyabr*, June 15, 1926, 4; "Ten Pogromists on Trial in Polotzk," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 8, 1926.
52. "Four Pogrom Leaders Sentenced to Prison by Soviet Tribunal," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, June 15, 1926.
53. "Shvartsmeyenikes af der bashuldikungs-bank," *Der emes*, June 11, 1926, 4.
54. "Fun gerikht: Shvartsmeyenikes af der bashuldikungs-bank," *Der emes*, June 14, 1926, 4.
55. On the Orsha pogrom of 1905 and the pogromists brought to trial in 1928, see "Novaia antisemitskaia vykhodna," *Izvestiia*, November 24, 1928, 2.
56. A new stage in the cycle coincided with the 1930 early purges of Soviet administrative personnel. For example, in September of that same year, an investigation revealed that a number of pogromists responsible for the 1919 Uman pogrom had covered up their traces by taking up positions in the Soviet leadership; they were eventually arrested in Kiev, and found guilty. One of them, who had worked for the Commissariat of Agriculture during the 1920s, was accused of sabotaging the campaign for the Jewish resettlement on land, and was executed. See "Two Russian Pogromists Shot; 3 Others Get Prison Terms," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, September 12, 1930.
57. On the *lieu de mémoire* and the relationship between space and national memory, see Pierre Nora, ed., *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire* , vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). On trauma and place, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
58. These claims were collected to meet the demands made by European governments that the Soviet Union pay reparations for the losses caused during World War I and the Revolution. See, for example, "Our Foreign News Letter," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 4, 1924.

59. On the Evobshchestkom collecting materials in the aftermath of the pogrom in Trostianets, see USHMM, RG 31.057, M. 0019. 000000102 (GAKO, f. 3050, op. 1, d. 246, l. 53ob, "Program to collect materials on the pogroms, 17/I/1922").
60. See Evobshchestkom, *Pogromy, uchinennye belopoliakami: ofitsialnye dokumenty, obsledovaniia, i svidetelskie pokazania* (Moscow: b.i., 1921).
61. For a detailed description of the exhibition, see Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587, pp. 50991–1008.
62. Ibid., p. 50995. The photograph of the children's tortured bodies in the Velizh pogrom, in the Vitebsk region, was reproduced in Ostrovskii, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 61.
63. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587, p. 50998.
64. Iak. Okunev, "Otrazheniia," *Pravda*, August 23, 1923. Still, it is interesting that the *Pravda* article does not refer to Russian Jewish capitalists (the Ginzburgs, Brodskys, and the Poliakovs) but to foreign ones only. It leaves the impression that Russian Jews were all "toiling masses" united behind the Revolution. Another positive review of the exhibition appeared in the weekly *Ogoniok* (Little Flame), which published some images of the "Jewish pogroms" in the September 1923 issue; see S. Gekht, "O banditakh, umershchvlennikh i sirotakh," *Ogoniok*, September 30, 1923, 7–8.
65. See Liadov, *O vrazhde k evreiam*, 10, 16, 23–24.
66. See, for example, Zhigalin, *Prokliatoe nasledie (ob antisemitizme)*, 64. As the author of the pamphlet noted, "Only Jewish workers and artisans suffered because of the pogroms; the Jewish bourgeoisie was seldom touched by the violence." Ibid., 75. See also Sandormirskii, *Puti antisemitizma v Rossii*, 22.
67. Zhigalin, *Prokliatoe nasledie*, 72. It is however true that in some places and instances poor Jews suffered more during the pogrom than well-to-do Jews, who paid off the attackers and even hired personal guards to protect their homes, albeit not always successfully. See Khiterer, "Trostianets," 61.
68. See Y. Lapkes, "Evreiskaia obshchestvennost na protsesse Shvartsbarda," *Tribuna* 9 (1927): 5–6.
69. El. Olshevets, "Krovavye stranitsi proshlogo," *Pravda*, March 10, 1927, 3.
70. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 587, p. 51003.
71. Peretz Markish, *The Mound*, in *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*, ed. David G. Roskies (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 362–67. For an excellent analysis of the poem see Amelia Glaser, *Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlans: From the Shtetl Fair to the Petersburg Bookshop* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 131–39.
72. Dovid Bergelson, "Among Refugees," in *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*, ed. David G. Roskies (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 263–74.
73. Itsik Kipnis, "Months and Days," in *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*, ed. David G. Roskies (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 323–55.

74. A. F. Maleev, *Tridtsats dnei evreiskogo pogroma v m. Krivoe-Ozero: iz lichnykh nabliudenii i perezhivanii russkogo uchitelia* (Odessa: Izdanie Odessogo gub. otdela narodnogo obrazovaniia, 1920).
75. Ibid., 18.
76. Faygnberg, *Letopis*.
77. By contrast, one of the most authoritative accounts of the civil war pogroms, *Bagrovaia kniga*, which was put together in 1922 by Russian writer Sergei Gusev-Orenburgskii, on the basis of testimonies, statistics, and reports collected through the Relief Society to Help the Victims of the Pogroms (DEKOPO), included information about the Red Army's involvement in anti-Jewish violence. This made the book problematic. It was eventually censored by the Soviets.
78. The introduction to the Russian translation of Faygnberg's book does admit the importance of the account, which "conveys the essence of the tornado of pogroms in Ukraine that destroyed more than 900 cities and shtetls and took 300,000 Jewish lives." Faygnberg, *Letopis*, 4.
79. See, for example, Liadov, *O vrazhde k evreiam*, 20–22; Zhigalin, *Prokliatoe nasledie (ob antisemitizme)*, 31, 56, 72 (here the author refers explicitly to the work of Vladimir Korolenko and to Bialik's poem *In the City of Slaughter*, translated in Russian by Vladimir Jabotinsky).
80. P. Zelmanovskii, "Koshmarnyi iubilei," *Tribuna* 7, no. 16 (1928): 4.
81. Sholem Levin, "14/9/1903 finf-un-tsvantsik yor funem Homler pogrom, 14/9/1928," *Der emes*, September 14, 1928, 2.
82. See S. Borovoi, "Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaia voina ukrainskogo naroda protiv polskogo vladychestva, i evreiskoe naselenie Ukrainy," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 9 (1940): 81–124; see, in particular, ibid., 115–20. Here, the author argued that Jews were not merely victims but combatants who fought together with the Polish landowners and, at times, even with the Cossacks. See also S. Rabinovich, *Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny: kratkii ocherk* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsialno-ekonomicheskoe izdatelstvo, 1935). Here, the author acknowledged that the violence of the pogroms of the civil war exceeded those that took place under the tsar; see ibid., 83.
83. For a discussion of the movie, see J. Hoberman, *Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds* (New York: Museum of Modern Art: Schocken Books, 1991), 96–101; see also Raikin Ben-Ari, *Ha-bimah* (Chicago: L. M. Shtayn, 1937), 240–46.
84. On the pogrom in Litin, see Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 51, 389–91.
85. Hoberman, *Bridge of Light*, 99.
86. Ibid.
87. See the film review in *Pravda*, April 19, 1927, 8.
88. Established in 1925, OZET counted 60,000 members in the mid-1920s; in the 1930s, it counted 300,000, but many Soviet citizens were forced to register as members. On OZET see Jonathan L. Dekel-Chen, *Farming the Red Land: Jewish*

Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1924–1941 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); and Robert Weinberg, *Stalin's Forgotten Zion: Birobidzhan and the Making of a Soviet Homeland: An Illustrated History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

89. OZET Poster, Backcover of *Tribuna* 8 (1927): 15.
90. "Kuda idut Parichi," *Tribuna* 2 (April1927): 8–9.
91. Z. Ostrovskii, "Evrei Dagestana," *Tribuna* 4 no. 5 (June–July1927): 9.
92. Detailed descriptions of torture and killing appeared in all other brochures. But the perpetrators were never members of the proletariat. For an example of the normative narrative of the violence, see E. Dobun, *Pravda o evreiakh* (Leningrad: Krasnaia gazeta, 1928), 27–28. On "pogrom" as pre-revolutionary anti-Jewish violence, see also S. Leningradskii, *Kto i za chto ustraival pogromy nad evreiami* (Moscow: Krasnaia nov, 1924).
93. Yuri Larin, "Kto vinoven v Petliurovskikh pogromakh," *Tribuna* 8 (October 1927): 6–8. This was reiterated, for example, in Sandormirskii, *Puti antisemitizma*, 22: "The few survivors of the pogroms of 1881, and 1905 . . . will all confirm that the violence, rape, and destruction against Jews touched only the poor and left untouched the wealthy ones with their villas and dachas. The Ginzburgs, Poliakovs, and Brodskis were left untouched." On covering up the involvement of local population in the violence, and arguing that the local population eagerly came to the rescue and defended the Jews, see N. Lagovier, *Antisemitizm i borba s nim* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe iuridicheskoe izdatelstvo, 1930), 13.
94. P. Zelmanovskii, "Leningradskie teatri v borbe s antisemitizmom," *Tribuna* 19 (1929): 32.
95. See, for example, Israel Sosis, *Di geshikhte fun di yidishe gezelshaftlekhe shtrebungen in Rusland in 19tn y"h* (Minsk: Vaysrusisher melukhe-farlag, 1929), 153–61.
96. V. E. Kelner, *Ocherki po istorii russko-evreiskogo knizhnogo dela vo vtoroi polovine XIX-nachale XX v.* (Petersburg: Rossiiskaia natsionalnaia biblioteka, 2003), 186–221. See also GARF, f. 296, op. 3, d. 1, ll. 1–4 (Protocols of the Jewish Historical Commission, 1920).
97. Simon Dubnow and Grigory Krasnyi, eds., *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii*, vol. 1 (Petrograd: Kadimah, 1919), 1.
98. The commission did collect materials on the pogroms of the civil war. Following its liquidation, these were transferred to the archives of the Jewish section of the Commissariat for Nationality Affairs and eventually included in the publication *Evreiskie pogromy, 1918–1921*.
99. The 1827 *rekrutchina*, or cantonist decree issued by Tsar Nicholas I made Jews responsible for military service. In Russia, all recruits had to serve twenty-five years. If they married, their offspring became the patrimony of the Russian military and were destined to attend schools for soldiers' children called "cantonists' institutions." Jews were legally entitled to religious freedom, including the right to celebrate most religious holidays, granted that their observance did not interfere

with their training schedules. Some differences between Jews and non-Jews applied: most significantly, Jews were required to provide conscripts between the ages of 12 and 25, whereas non-Jewish conscripts were between 18 and 35 of age. See Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, "Military Service in Russia," in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 1170–74.

100. Osher Margolis, *Yidishe folksmasn in kamf kegn zeyere unterdriker* (Moscow: Emes, 1940), 76–77, 89–105.
101. Sosis disapproved of Dubnow's examination of the pogroms carried out during the Cossack Haidamak uprisings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which the "bourgeois" historian linked directly, as a perpetual continuum, to the pogroms that took place in Ukraine during the civil war. In his static view of Ukrainian antisemitism, Dubnow created a narrative of uninterrupted anti-Jewish *Haidamatchina* (Haidamak rebellions), which repeated itself cyclically and inevitably every century. One of the goals of Soviet Jewish historians was in fact to provide evidence of the normalization of the Jews as a group, and consequently of their past, shaping a normal—read Marxist—narrative based primarily on class struggle. In other words, Jews experienced the class struggle, which was at the heart of Jewish history—as it was at the heart of any development in history—and therefore deserved a place among the "brotherhood of nations." On the work of Israel Sosis and on his relationship with Dubnow see Elissa Bemporad, "Dubnov's Wayward Son: Israel Sosis and the Legacy of Russian Jewish Historiography," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* 29 (December 2016): 105–19.
102. D. Fridliand, "Antisemitizm," in *Bolshaia Sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe nauchnoe izdatelstvo "Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia," 1926), 68–76; and Dimanshtein, "Evreiskie pogromy v Rossii," 144–49. See also "Pogroms," in *Bolshaia Sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 45 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe nauchnoe izdatelstvo "Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia," 1940), 763–64.
103. *Program fun der yidisher shprakh un literatur farn I un II kontsenter fun der zibnyoriker sovetisher politekhnisher shul (shtotisher, fabrik-zavodisher un kolvirtisher shul) un metodishe onvayzungen tsu dem* (Minsk: Gezelshaftkentenish in di yidishe zibnyorike shuln, tsveyter kontsenter, 1928).
104. *Program fun yidish un literatur far zibnyoriker shul mit metodishe briv tsu der program* (Minsk: Folkombild fun Vaysrusland, 1927), 5; and *Program far gezelshaftkentenish in di yidishe zibnyorike shuln, tsveyter kontsenter* (Minsk: Folkombild fun Vaysrusland, 1928).
105. *Program fun gezelshaftkentenish far 1–4 lernyor in der politekhnisher shul* (Kharkov-Kiev: Folkskomisariat far bildung Ukraine, 1932), 18–19.
106. *Program fun yidish un literatur*, 80–81.
107. *Program fun der yidisher shprakh un literatur farn I un II kontsenter fun der zibnyoriker sovetisher politekhnisher shul (shtotisher, fabrik-zavodisher un*

kolvirtisher shul) un metodishe onvayzungen tsu dem (Moscow: Tsentraler felker farlag, 1930), 22; and *Program fun yidish un literatur*, 6.

108. K. Hodoshevitsh, Sh. Yofe, and M. Mogilnitski, *Undzer royte heym: arbet-bukh af gezelshaftkentenish farn 4tn lernyor* (Moscow: Tsentraler felker farlag fun Fssr, 1931), 56–58, see also 87–89, 115–17.
109. E. Yaroslavskii, "V byvshem gnezde chernogo vorona," *Bezbozhnik* 9 (September 1934): 12–13.
110. Institute of Manuscripts of the National Library of Ukraine V. Vernadskii, All-Ukrainian Mykola Leontovych Music Society, f. 50, op. 951, d. Apanovich Grigory (Aleksandrovich), *Proskurovskaia tragediia*, ll. 1–6. Apanovich was a member of the Leontovych Music Society. Established in Kiev in 1922 and active until 1929, the society had branches in the cities and towns of Ukraine, including Proskurov, and consisted of more than thirty music collectives and more than three hundred individuals.
111. Ibid. The number of 5,000 victims is clearly an exaggeration here.
112. Here the reference is to the Five-Year plan to be completed in four years.
113. See, for example, P. Z-skii, *Evreiskii karmannyi kalendar-spravochnik na 1925–26 god* (Sverdlovsk: Izdanie sverdlovskoi evreiskoi obshchiny, 1925), 7–8.
114. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 400, pp. 35099, 35105–6, "Ocherk proshedshego, Ovruch." The report was sent to Paris and used in the Schwarzbard trial.
115. Nisn Rozental, *Yidish lebn in ratnfarband* (Tel Aviv, Israel: Y. L. Peretz, 1971), 177–78.
116. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2309, ll. 32, 34, "Report on banditry by the head of the Starobelskii regional department of the GPU to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine." See also Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 521, p. 43246 (A. Siegov, "5-letie fevralskikh sobitiikh na Podolii: 1919, 14–15 fevralia 1924," *Raboche-Krestianskaia gazeta*, Vinnista, February 17, 1924).
117. The Soviet understanding of the pogrom is idyiosyncratic and tied to the Revolution. That of Jews is tied to the memory of violence and suffering throughout Jewish history.
118. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 181–83, 822–23.
119. This trend changed in the 1960s with a spike in the arrests and trials of Germans and local collaborators involved in killing Jews. On Soviet trials of local collaborators, see Tanja Penter, "Collaboration on Trial: New Source Material on Soviet Postwar Trials against Collaborators," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 782–90; and Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–1944* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).
120. On purges targeting the Ukrainian intelligentsia during the Great Terror, see Serhii Kokin and Marc Junge, eds., *Velykyi terror v Ukraini: "Kutkulska operatsiia"*

1937–1938 gg, 2 vols. (Kyiv: Vydavnychyi dim "Kyievo-mohylianska akademiia," 2010); Yuri Shapoval, "La Iejovschina en Ukraine (1936–1938)," *Vingtieme Siecle. Revue d'histoire* 107 (July–September 2010): 39–54; and Olga Bertelsen, "The House of Writers in Ukraine in the 1930s: Conceived, Lived, Perceived," *Carl Beck Papers* 2302 (August 2013): 4–72.

121. Ilia Ehrenburg, *Liudy, gody, zhizn: vospominaniia v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1990), 310. Ehrenburg also described the pogroms in his novel *The Extraordinary Adventures of Julio Jurenito and His Disciples* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1930).
122. In the late 1930s, Yiddish writers no longer discussed the pogroms of the civil war. One exception was Moshe Kulbak, who wrote a short novel about the years of the civil war in Belorussia. Perhaps for this very reason his work was confiscated and destroyed by the Soviet secret police in the wake of his arrest, in 1937. M. L., "Far hekherer kvalitet un politisher aktuelkayt, afn disput ovnt vegn spektaklen fun yidishn teater," *Oktyabr,* March 30, 1937, 2, 4.
123. Quoted in Arkadi Zeltser, "The Subject of 'Jews in Babi Yar' in the Soviet Union in the Years 1941–1945," accessed February 2016, http://www.yadvashem.org/research/about/mirilashvili-center/articles/babi-yar.html.
124. In condemning Kipnis's postwar work as too nationalistic, a Soviet literary critic acknowledged that his 1947 short stories were influenced by his 1926 pogrom novella and its emphasis on Jewish particularistic suffering.
125. Khaim Loytsker, "Far ideysher reynkayt fun undzer literature," *Der shtern*, n. 2, March 1948, 112, quoted in Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princetome University Press), 223, n. 91.

CHAPTER 4

1. Levin, "Af der Minsker shukh-fabrik fun individuele bashtelungen arudeven konterevolutsyonere elementn," *Oktyabr*, March 21, 1937, 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.; and L., "Fun gerikht: bashtrofn far zeyer natsyonale sine," *Oktyabr*, April 4, 1937, 4.
4. This stage of the terror became known as Yezhovshchina, literally the Yezhov regime, after Nikolai Yezhov, who served at the time as head of the Soviet secret police.
5. The literature on the Great Terror is vast. See, for example, Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); O. V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Hiroaki Kuromiya, *The Voices of the Dead: Stalin's Great Terror of the 1930s* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); and Lynne Viola, *Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

6. On the first case of blood libel accusation in Tula, see chapter 2 in this volume on pp. 48–49.
7. USHMM, RG 31.026M, Selected records from TsDAGOU, Central Party Committee, reel 83, pp. 705–6, "Summary about the manifestations of antisemitism in the city and the village, 1926" (TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 7, d. 165).
8. Ibid., 706. The GPU report emphasized that Party members and non-members alike made the accusation.
9. David Hoffman, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).
10. Moshe Lewin, "Society, State and Ideology During the First Five Year Plan," in *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 41–77.
11. Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews, 1870–1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 20–23.
12. This is something we do not encounter in pre-1917 tsarist Russia, as we do elsewhere in Central Europe, most prominently in Germany. On the interplay between attacks against Jewish religious rituals, racially based antisemitism and modern politics in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany see, Robin Judd, *Contested Rituals: Circumcision, Kosher Butchering, and the Jewish Political Life in Germany, 1843–1933* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). For examples of the negative depictions of the adept in these two Jewish rituals of blood in Soviet literature see Isaac Babel, "Karl-Yankl," in *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel* (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2002), 619–27; and Ilia Ehrenburg, "Burnaia zhizn Lazika Roitshvanetsa," in *Neobychainye pokhozhdenia: proza*, ed. B. Ia. Frezinskii (St. Petersburg: Kristall, 2001), 936–40.
13. Compared to *shechitah* (or ritual slaughter), circumcision is closer to the blood allegation because it involves child mutilation.
14. Tcherikower, *In der tkufe fun revolutsye*, 391–92; see also Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 735, pp. 62296–7 ("Decree by the GubProdKom, 1920").
15. Tcherikower Collection, RG 80, fol. 735, p. 62297 ("Petition").
16. Larin, *Evrei i antisemitizm v SSSR*, 231.
17. "Uladovker antisemitn protses," *Der shtern*, January 10, 1929, 3.
18. See, for example, M. Barkovskii, *Chto nado znat kazhdomu o khistianskom i evreiskom prazdnike paskhi* (Novgorod: Novgor. okruzh. izdat., 1928).
19. P. Lagarf, *Obrezanie: ego sotsialnoe i religioznoe znachenie* (Moscow: Krasnaia Nov, 1923).
20. On the disparate meaning of blood rituals among ethnic insiders and ethnic outsiders, see Marvin Harris, *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1989).
21. "Di klerikaln-shediker farn proletarishn gerikht," *Oktyabr*, March 22, 1931, 3. For more on the practice of circumcision in the Soviet context, see Elissa Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 112–44.

22. Larin, *Evrei i antisemitizm*, 238. On the Leninsk legal case in which the Soviet doctor Cherviakov testified at the trial, citing as evidence the autopsy of the bodies of tens of Jewish children who died because of circumcision see G. Ia. Kiselev, *O kreshchenii i obrezanii* (Moscow: Ogiz, 1937), 30–31. Here the author also mentions an instance of circumcision malpractice that resulted in the death of an infant in Uman in 1937, and condemns the modern practice of turning to doctors and surgeons to carry out circumcision.
23. During the 1920s, *Bezbozhnik* organized radio courses to train lecturers and activists in anti-religious propaganda. The students, who had to be at least sixteen years of age, would take the course over the radio, at no cost, and receive a supply of an anti-religious textbooks.
24. See, for example, Tsentral farvaltung fun gezkult, "Kegn got, far kultur un bilding: groyser antireligyezer marsh," *Yunge gvardie*, April 12, 1929, 6.
25. On the role of anti-religious propaganda in perpetuating certain stereotypes about Jews and Judaism among non-Jews, see the excellent study by Robert Weinberg, "Demonizing Judaism in the Soviet Union in the 1920s," *Slavic Review* 67, no. 1 (2008): 120–53. As Weinberg confirms, the two most prominent artists who contributed to *Bezbozhnik u stanka*—Dmitrii Moor and Mikhail Cheremnykh—were not Jewish. See ibid., 144–45.
26. Gosudarstvenniy muzei istorii religii (hereafter GMIR), "Reznik," E-7582-VII. I am indebted to Dr. Alla Sokolova, and thank her for sharing her knowledge and the images with me.
27. GMIR, "Obrezanie," E-5735-VII. For a photograph of the drawing depicting circumcision, located in the section on Judaism at the museum in 1936, see Alla Sokolova, "Between Ethnography of Religion and Anti-Religious Propaganda: Jewish Graphics in the Leningrad and Moscow Museums in the 1930s," in *Three Cities of Yiddish: St.1 Petersburg, Warsaw, and Moscow*, ed. M. Krutikov and G. Estraikh (Oxford: Legenda, 2017), 178.
28. The artist K. M. Mitrofanov was the author of a drawing dated 1938, which depicts a pioneer forcibly undergoing circumcision. In the painting the ritual is carried out by three Tatar men, one of whom is holding the knife in his hand. See GMIR, M-10209-VII, K. I. Mitrofavov, "Nasilstvennoe obrezanie pionera."
29. TsDAVOU, f. 413, op. 1, d. 10, l. 89 (Otchet Tsentralnyi komissi natsionalnikh menshentsv pri VuTsike 1/10 1924–25). In the Soviet Republic of Ukraine, for example, Jews made up 1,554.376 and Muslims (mainly Tatars) only 9,779.
30. Kiselev, *O kreshchenii i obrezanii*, 28–30. By the turn of the century, the use of a sponge to draw blood in lieu of the mouth of the circumciser had become a common practice among Jews. As early as 1890, for example, one of the leading rabbinic figures of Russian Jewry, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, acknowledged the existence of the new practice, even though he condemned it. See Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Arukh ha-shulkhan. Yoreh De'ah* (Jerusalem: M. Pollak, 1950), 264: 19.
31. Isaac Babel, "Karl-Yankl," in *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*, ed. Nathalie Babel, trans. Peter Constantine (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 619–27. On the trope

of the bloodthirsty Jew in Russian culture, see Murav, "Predatory Jew and Russian Vitalism," 151–72; and Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews*, 137–43.

32. Sandormirskii, *Puti antisemitizma*, 32–33.
33. On Soviet attacks on circumcision, see L. I. Kilimnik, ed., *Kommunisticheskaia vlast protiv religii Moiseia: Dokumenty 1920–1937 i 1945–1953 gg.* (Vinnitsa: "Khrani i pomni," 2005), 146–51; and Kiselev, *O kreshchenii i obrezanii*, 24–30.
34. E. Yaroslavskii, *Razvernutym frontom: o zadachakh i metodakh antireligioznoy propagandy: doklad vsesoiuznym sezd soiuz bezbozhnikov* (Moscow: Bezbozhnik, 1929), 35.
35. Ibid., 37.
36. "Prohibition of Schechita Planned in Soviet Russia," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 20, 1929.
37. This became a rather widespread feature of the modern blood libel, emerging even in the American context of the twentieth century. The year of the acquittal of Beilis, in April 1913, fourteen-year-old Mary Phagan was found murdered in the basement of a pencil factory owned by a Jew—Leo Frank. He was abducted, lynched, and hanged from a tree by a group called the Knights of Mary Phagan.
38. On the Blondes Affair, see Darius Staliunas, *Enemies for a Day*, 47–51, 59–61; and G. B. Sliozberg, *Delo minuvshikh dnei: zapiski russkogo evreia*, vol. 3 (Paris: Imprimerie Pascal, 1934), 24–35. According to Sliozberg, who was involved in the investigation, the Blondes trial was the first one in which the alleged victim was an adult, a twenty-one-year-old Polish housemaid. Blondes was eventually sentenced to prison for a year and a half, while the real culprit remained at large.
39. On the centrality of forensic medicine and scientific language in the court cases on ritual murder, see Hillel Kieval, "The Rules of the Game: Forensic Medicine and the Language of Science in the Structuring of Modern Ritual Murder Trials," *Jewish History* 26, nos. 3–4 (2012): 287–307.
40. USHMM, RG 31.026M (Selected records from TsDAGOU, Central Party Committee), reel 83, p. 706, "Memorandum about manifestations of antisemitism in the city and in the village" (TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 7, d. 165, l. 5).
41. Ibid., p. 723.
42. Ibid., p. 726.
43. See Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*, in particular ch. 2.
44. A review of the painting appeared in *La Croix*, April 9, 1916.
45. I thank Jeff Taylor for sharing with me photographs of the painting, as well as his knowledge of the painting's history, which was apparently commissioned by a Russian aristocratic family to the Hungarian artist Mihaly Munkacsy.
46. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 3198, l. 98 (Supplement to the bulletin on anonymous fliers and anti-Soviet writings based on data by GPU Ukraine, January 3 through July 3, 1930).
47. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2314, ll. 150–51 (GPU Ukraine, Report on the most prominent expressions in the mood of the unemployed, 21/12, 1926).

48. Lamed, "Blut af matse," 4.
49. "Sentence Soviet Official for Blood Ritual Libel," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 14, 1929. On a blood libel case that occurred in Dagestan in 1929, during which the village chairman was arrested because he failed to intervene and restore order among the ritual murder instigators see "Ritual Murder Tale Spread," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 16, 1929.
50. On the changing roles of Jewish women in Soviet society, see Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews*, in particular, ch. 6.
51. Rozental, *Yidish lebn in ratnfarband*, 164.
52. Ibid., 167–68.
53. Ibid., 164–68. Other instances in which Jewish women were accused of engaging in blood rituals and targeting non-Jews (mostly Muslim children) emerged in post-World War II Central Asia. In September 1961, in the city of Margelan, a pogrom ensued after the the accusation against a Jewish woman of allegedly abducting and murdering a two-year-old boy for ritual purposes. Her cooking vessels and the food in her posession were confiscated during the investigation to make sure that there was no trace of human blood. Similar searches were conducted in dozens of Jewish homes, in connection with the accusation. In a second instance, which occurred in the city of Tashkent, in April 1962, a Muslim man accused a Jewish woman of having taken blood from the ear of his younger daughter to use in a Passover ritual. The local prosecutor ordered the woman's arrest. She was held in prison for three weeks and her home was thoroughly searched by the police. A local Soviet official demanded the expulsion of all Jews from the city and the prosecutor allegedly asserted, in a private conversation, that Jews customarily use Muslim blood for their religious practices. See "'Blood-Libel' Outbreaks in Soviet Asia," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 2, no. 2 (May 1963): 34, and no. 3 (September 1963): 37–38; and "New Blood Libels Unmasked: Significant Pattern Begins to Emerge," *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, May 31, 1963, 12–13. Regarding another instance involving a Jewish woman in Tashkent in 1962, see Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 213–14.
54. H. Zaydman, "Galekh Trzeciaks naye hetse kegn yidn un yidishe emune," *Der moment*, April 6, 1936, 8. On Monsignor Trzeciak see, for example, Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism, 1933–1939* (Jerusalem: SICSA, Hebrew University, 1999), 94. The nexus between blood libel, communism, and Judaism was widely disseminated in the Jesuit publication *Civiltà Cattolica*, one of the oldest Italian Catholic periodicals. With the advent of fascism the demonization of Jews no longer depended exclusively on the Church. To be sure, fascist propaganda openly connected the idea of world domination with the blood libel, attacking Jewish religious rituals—circumcision and ritual slaughter in particular—which fed into the lie of ritual homicide.
55. "A blut-bilbl in Varshe," *Der shtern*, March 31, 1927, 3. For additional instances of ritual murder accusations in which Jews were arrested in Poland, see "Polish Court of Appeal Releases Jews Held in Ritual Murder Tale Riots," *Jewish Telegraphic*

Agency, November 29, 1927 (in this case, Jews were accused of killing a gypsy child); A. Ben-Dovid, "An alilas-dam kegn yidn in Luboml," *Haynt*, November 1, 1928, 4 (here a Jewish man was accused of attempting to carry out ritual murder on a young Polish woman); I. R., "Alilas-dam in Stutshin," *Der moment*, May 6, 1927, 9 (a young housemaid working in a Jewish household went missing and the Jewish family was accused); L. Markus, "Politsey forsht an oysergeveyntlekhn alilas-dam af a yidisher familye in Vilne," *Der moment*, July 20, 1933, 6 (this case, too, involved the disappearance of a Polish housemaid); M. G. Zimerman, "Alilas-dam nokh simkhes toyre," *Der moment*, December 3, 1930, 3; and Z. Efros, "Der durkhgefalener 'Beylis-protses' in a mayrev Galitsishn shtetl," *Haynt*, May 21, 1933, 6 (here, too, a Jewish man allegedly abducted a Polish girl for ritual murder).

56. As we have seen in chapter 2, confusion about the specific timing of the Jewish religious holiday during which Jews presumably consumed matzah was common. In Tula, for example, the accusation that Jews needed Christian blood for matzah emerged in July, while in Central Asia it appeared at the time of the Yom Kippur holiday.
57. "Der nisht-ayngegebener alilas-dam afn Vilner senator ha-rav Rubinshteyn," *Haynt*, September 30, 1927, 3. On housemaids in the Soviet context of the 1920s and 1930s, see Alissa Klotz, *The Kitchen Maid that Will Rule the State: Domestic Service and the Soviet Revolutionary Project, 1917–1941* (PhD diss., Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, 2017).
58. Reinhard Rurup, "A Success Story and Its Limits," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 3–15.
59. On the anxieties of Jewish men over the extreme emancipation of Jewish women see Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews*, ch. 6.

CHAPTER 5

1. Inaugurated in 1927, the museum was named after the grandfather of modern Yiddish literature (né Sholem Yankev Abramovitch), who had lived and written most of his literary gems in the city. One of the museum's rooms was dedicated to Mendele and his work. It preserved his manuscripts, his library, his desk and chair, and even a yarmulka belonging to the great Yiddish writer. Another room stored the *pinkasim*, or the minute books of local and regional Jewish communities that chronicled Jewish life in Ukraine. Other sections in the museum celebrated the Jewish workers' movement, the history of Yiddish theater, printing, and Jewish agricultural settlements. See A. R., "Muzei imeni Mendele," *Tribuna* 9 (November 1927): 24.
2. The museum also housed an exhibit room on self-defense, which included materials donated by M. Rozenfeld, the head of the Jewish self-defense unit in the Belotserkov region, who bequeathed his archive to the museum. E. Adasov, "Muzei imeni Mendele Mocher Seforim," *Tribuna* 7 (May 1928): 24.

3. "Muzei imeni Mendele," 24; and "Evreiskaia zhizn v SSSR," *Tribuna* 18, 1929, 30. The Museum operated throughout the interwar period. Most of its collections were destroyed during World War II.
4. V. L. Shaporina, *Dnevnik* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011), 184–85. One of the writers who approached Stalin was Ilia Ehrenburg. Shaporina did not recall the name of the female writer. She was most likely Margarita Aliger.
5. Sh. Dimanshtein, ed. *Yidn in FSSR: Zamlbukh* (Moscow: Der emes, 1935), 17–18. The myth was constructed by contrasting the extreme suffering that Jews faced under the old regime with the exceptional happiness and rebirth they experienced under the Soviets. For an example of the genre that exploits this myth, see the memoir on the suffering (possibly exaggerated) experienced by Jews at the time of their expulsion from Moscow, in 1891–93 by S. S. Vermel, *Moskovskoe izgnanie, 1891–1892: vpechatleniia, vospominaniia* (Moscow: Der emes, 1924); see, in particular, ibid., 28–29, 35–43.
6. Dimanshtein, *Yidn in FSSR*, 187–88, 190.
7. A. N. Milner, "Freydik iz undzer lebn: tsum 15yorikn yubiley fun kinder-heym," *Oktyabr*, May 9, 1936, 3. One of the slogans of OZET—the main Soviet Jewish organization that existed until 1937—captured the Soviet Jewish myth as follows: "Pogroms and discrimination for the Jewish poor—that is the will of the Tsar; hammer and sickle, that's the will of October." See "V tsentralnom pravlenii OZETa," *Tribuna* 9, November 1927, 13.
8. On a pogrom in Lithuania in 1929, see Dimanshtein, *Yidn in FSSR*, 14. On a pogrom in the city of Lvov in mid-1929, and the ensuing anti-Polish demonstrations held in Kiev, see Bratin, "Pogrom vo Lvove," *Izvestiia*, June 5, 1929, 1; and Bratin, "Trudiashiesia Kieva protestuiut," *Izvestiia*, June 8, 1929, 1. On a pogrom in Kishinev, triggered by a blood libel accusation, and carried out with the support of the authorities, see MOPR, "Podrobnosti pogroma v Kishineve," *Pravda*, December 14, 1926, 2.
9. Segalovitsh, "Far a prekhtik land—a prekhtik konstitutsye," *Oktyabr*, July 6, 1936, 2.
10. "Uretsher tragedye (tsum 16tn yortog fun der bafrayung fun VSSR)," *Oktyabr*, July, 12, 1936, 3. For a later example of the celebration of the Soviet Jewish myth, see S. A. Tokarev, *Etnografiia narodov SSSR: istoricheskie osnovy byta i kultury* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1958), 209.
11. A. Bragin, "Zdravstvui budushee!" *Tribuna* 1 (January1927): 14–15.
12. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2800, l. 22 (Kharkov, July 21, 1928, GPU Special Report).
13. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1920, l. 55 (March 30, 1924, GPU Special Report on the population mood).
14. On the conditions in the countryside, see, for example, ibid., l. 84.
15. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2800, l. 15 (GPU report on the workers' mood in Ukraine, January 20, 1928).
16. See ibid., l. 14; and TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2314 (GPU Ukraine, Report, August 15–27, 1926, Kharkov), l. 11.

17. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2314, l. 57ob (GPU Report on the workers' mood, October 23, 1925, to January 9, 1926). The United or Joint Opposition was established in the Bolshevik Party in early 1926 when the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky merged with the New Opposition led by Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev to counter Stalin's center position.
18. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2316, ll. 53–54, 75 (GPU Ukraine, Special report on the political dispositions of peasants in Ukraine).
19. Ibid., l. 139.
20. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 3198, l. 9ob (Anonymous fliers and anti-Soviet writings based on data collected by GPU Ukraine, January 1, 1930 through January 3, 1930).
21. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2314, l. 124ob (GPU Ukraine, Report on the mood of the unemployed, November 15, 1925 through January 10, 1926).
22. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2314, l. 38 (GPU Ukraine, Report on the workers' mood, October 15–23, 1926).
23. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 3198, l. 4 (Anonymous fliers and anti-Soviet writings based on data collected by GPU Ukraine, January 3 through July 3, 1930). On the attempt to organize a pogrom in Khmelnik (Khmylnik) in the Vinnitsa region, see *Der shtern*, January 10, 1929, 3.
24. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 3192, l. 27 (Special report on the conversations among workers in the factories of Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa about the peasants' unrest).
25. "Accuse Soviet Judges of Persecution of Their Jewish Associate," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 8, 1929.
26. TsDGAOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 3021, ll. 1–12 (Report on antisemitism, January 1929).
27. Ibid., l. 23.
28. On antisemitism in disguise, see, for example, Liadov, *O vrazhde k evreiam*, 29.
29. TsDAGOU, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2689, ll. 28–29 (Petition to NARKOM RKI, by M. Ch. Perel, November 16, 1928).
30. APPO Leningradskogo oblastkoma VKB(b), *Na borbu s antisemitizmom*, 18.
31. On instances of actual pogroms with Jewish casualties in Central Asia as a result of blood libel accusations, see chapter 2. For an interesting but flawed explanation of antisemitism in different regional contexts of the Soviet Union, see Larin, *Evrei i antisemitizm*, 127.
32. On outbursts of violent antisemitism in the interwar period, see, for example, Arkadi Zeltser, "Ethnic Conflict and Modernization in the Interwar Period," 182; and N. Lagovier, *Antisemitizm i borba s nim* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe iuridicheskoe izdatelstvo, 1930), 26–27.
33. On the so-called Beirach case, see, for example, Gorev, *Protiv antisemitov, ocherki i zarisovki*, 26; Zhigalin, *Prokliatoe nasledie (ob antisemitizme)*, 96–97.
34. For a discussion of what constitutes a pogrom, see Engel, "What's in a Pogrom?," 19–37.
35. "Za banditizm-rasstrel," *Pravda*, April 27, 1929, 5. See also "Soviet Court Sentences Five Peasants to Death for Attack on Jewish Settlers," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*,

April 29, 1929. On rumors about pogroms in Soviet Ukraine, see "Confirm Earlier Report of Ukraine Pogrom," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, January 22, 1924.

36. "Antisemitic Leader, Sentenced to Ten Years, Confesses to Deliberate Act," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 31, 1928; and "Antisemitism in Soviet Factories Due to Peasant Element Now in Cities," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 27, 1928. In a similar case from late 1929, a peasant meeting in Kosobrovsk, Ukraine, called for the expulsion from the village of "all gypsies, Jews and thieves," as a way to cleanse the Soviet apparatus from unwanted bourgeois elements; see YIVO Archives, RG 358, fol. 28A, l. 004 (JTA Cable from Moscow, November 21, 1929).
37. Lagovier, *Antisemitizm i borba s nim*, 30. See also "Soviet Russian Press Reports Anti-Jewish Pogrom in Russian Town," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 10, 1928.
38. "Soviet Embassy Denies Communist Paper's Report of Anti-Jewish Riots," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 21, 1928.
39. Z. Vendrof, "Antisemitizm in Sovet-Rusland un tsi iz er geferlekh far yidn?," *Der moment*, 28 May, 1925.
40. For a discussion of the interplay between the collapse of the state and the eruption of ethnic violence, see Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2016), Introduction.
41. "Sovetskaia inteligentsia vozmushchena evreiskimi pogromami v Germanii," *Pravda*, November 29, 1938, 2. See also "Presledovaniia evreev v Germanii," *Pravda*, May 20, 1939.
42. Mordechai Altshuler, "The Distress of Jews in the Soviet Union in the Wake of the Molotov Ribbentrop Pact," *Yad Vashem Studies* 36, no. 2 (2008): 74–77; see, in ibid., nn. 17, 78.
43. Ibid., 81.
44. Weiner, *Making Sense of War*; see, in particular, ibid., chapter 4.
45. Jerzy Edison, *My Four Years in Soviet Russia*, trans. Maurice Wolfthal (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 84.
46. Ibid., 84–85.
47. Ibid., 106, 113–14.
48. See, for example, David Bankier and Israel Gutman, eds., *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), 235, 247. On anti-Jewish violence in western Ukraine, see Wendy Lower, "Pogroms, Mob Violence, and Genocide in Western Ukraine, Summer 1941: Varied Histories, Explanations, and Comparisons," *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, no. 3 (2011): 217–46. On the question of collaboration between former communists and the Nazis under German occupation, see Jeffrey Burds, "Turncoats, Traitors, and Provocateurs: Communist Collaborators, the German Occupation, and Stalin's NKVD, 1941–1943," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* XX, no. X (2017): 1–33.
49. See Engel, *Assassination of Symon Petliura*. On the Lviv pogrom, see John-Paul Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists and the Carnival Crowd," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 53, nos. 2–4 (2011): 209–43.

50. Quoted in Bankier and Gutman, *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution*, 236.
51. For a detailed study of the Rovno massacre, see Jeffrey Burds, *Holocaust in Rovno: A Massacre in Ukraine, November 1941* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
52. With few exceptions our knowledge of local anti-Jewish violence unleashed in the pre-1939 Soviet Union is sparse compared to the newly annexed territories. One of the reasons stems, of course, from the fact that this kind of violence was less common in historic Soviet territories. In his fascinating account of neighborhood dynamics, interpersonal conflict, political division, and moral choices made under the German occupation, Oleksandr Melnyk convincingly argues that the Soviet official response to the events after the war, which included a uniquely thorough investigation and the public hanging of the culprits, is evidence of the unusual violence of the crime. See Oleksandr Melnyk, "Stalinist Justice as a Site of Memory: Anti-Jewish Violence in Kyiv's Podil District in September 1941 Through the Prism of Soviet Investigative Documents," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 61, no. 2 (2013): 223–48; see, in particular, ibid., 243.
53. USHMM, RG-50.477*0774, Oral history, Transcript of interview with Raisa Abramovna Livshitz, October 16, 1991.
54. Melnyk, "Stalinist Justice as a Site of Memory".
55. Ibid., 223, 237, 241–42.
56. Ibid., 229.
57. Ibid., 230.
58. On the role of the Holodomor in the history of Ukraine, see, for example, Andrea Graziosi, Lubomyr A. Hajda, and Halyna Hryn, "Introduction," in *After the Holodomor: The Enduring Impact of the Great Famine on Ukraine*, ed. Andrea Graziosi, Lubomyr A. Hajda, and Halyna Hryn (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, 2013).
59. Melnyk, "Stalinist Justice as a Site of Memory," 231; and n. 25.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 233.
62. For the original but abridged case file about the pogrom in Kiev in 1941, see USHMM, RG 31.018M, reel 1, pp. 1003–1097 (On the accusation of E. D. Ustinov and others, 1943–44).
63. On additional instances of anti-Jewish violence in Soviet Ukraine, see Elana J. Jakel, "*Ukraine Without Jews"? Nationality and Belonging in Soviet Ukraine, 1943–1948* (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2013).
64. Melnyk, "Stalinist Justice as a Site of Memory," 243–46.
65. It was no coincidence then, if in late 1944 NKGB officials included among the political faults of the prominent Yiddish writer Dovid Hofshtein his alleged plan to organize in Kiev a massive demonstration to mark the anniversary of the murder of Jews at Babi Yar. As much as the Jewish writer wanted to remember, NKGB officials were told to forget. See "Materials about the investigation of the Central Committee of the KP(b)U, Special communiqué of the NKGB USSR, September 28, 1944," in Mikhail Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy v 1943–1953gg: Ocherki dokumentirovannoi istorii*

(Kiev, Ukraine: Dukh i litera, 2004), 57. On the Soviet war crimes trials against collaborators, see, for example, Tanja Penter, "Local Collaborators on Trial: Soviet War Crimes Trials Under Stalin (1943–1953)," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 49, no. 2/3 (2008): 341–64.

66. A Soviet anti-fascist committee formed in August 1941 with the Kremlin's endorsement, to encourage the Western support of the war effort against Nazi Germany, and led by prominent Jewish cultural figures. See Shimon Redlich, *Propaganda and Nationalism in Wartime Russia: The Jewish Antifascist Committee in the USSR, 1941–1948* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1982); and S. Redlich, *War, Holocaust and Stalinism: A Documented History of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR* (New York: Routledge, 2016).
67. "EAK–V. M. Molotovu o sudbe evreev, utselevshikh na Ukraine, May 18, 1944," in *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm v SSSR ot nachala do kulminatsii, 1938–1953*, ed. Gennady Kostyrchenko (Moscow: Masterik, 2005), 50.
68. USHMM Archives, RG-50.226, reel 27, Interview with Yuri Rakhman, August 1994.
69. "communiqué by the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR about the events in Kiev of September 7, 1945," in Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy*, 65–67.
70. Edison, *My Four Years in Soviet Russia*, 174–75.
71. L. Ostrovskii, *Di yidn in Ratnfarband* (Paris: Undzer eynikayt, 1957), 12.
72. Leon Leneman, *La tragédie des Juifs en U.R.R.S.* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1959), 175–79; and Solomon Schwarts, *Evrei v Sovetskom Soiuze s nachala vtoroi mirovoi voiny (1939–1965)* (New York: Izdatelstvo Amerikanskogo evreiskogo rabochego komiteta, 1966), 257–58.
73. On this incident, see Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy*, 26–27; Leneman, *La tragédie des Juifs*, 179; Schwarts, *Evrei v Sovetskom Soiuze*, 257–58; and Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 228–229.
74. In September 1944, the NKGB in Ukraine had collected evidence about anti-Jewish manifestations similar to "pogroms, admitting that this was the result of German propaganda and the actions of Ukrainian nationalists." See "Materialy rassledovaniia TsK KP(b)U, Spetsialnogo soobshcheniia NKGB USSR, 28 sentiabria 1944g," in Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy*, 55.
75. "NKGB USSR Communiqués about the events in Kiev, September 1945," Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy*, 63–69; and "NKVD Ukrainy–V sekretariat TsK KP(b)U ob intsidente v Kieve 4 sentiabria 1945," in *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm v SSSR ot nachala do kulminatsii, 1938–1953,* ed. Gennady Kostyrchenko (Moscow: Materik, 2005), 62–63. On the pogrom see also Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 192–93.
76. "Byvshie frontoviki-evrei–I. V. Stalinu, L. L. Berii, P. N. Pospelovu o potvorstve ukrainskikh vlastei antisemitizmu, sentiabr 1945," in Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 66.
77. Ibid., 65.
78. Ibid., 66–71.

79. Ibid., 67–68. The letter criticized the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissar of Ukraine for failing to publicly acknowledge that thousands of Jews died "as heroes defending the motherland." They also kept silent about the fact that "no other people had experienced as much terror and grief as the Jewish people during the Great Patriotic War."
80. Ibid., 71.
81. Ibid., 69.
82. Ibid., 67, n. 1. As Weiner points out, the Soviets considered the veterans' equation of the Communist Party to the Nazi Party blasphemy and thus unforgivable. See Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 193–94.
83. Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 331.
84. On the memory of genocide in Soviet Minsk, see Anika Walke, *Pioneers and Partisans: An Oral History of Nazi Genocide in Belorussia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
85. Edison, *My Four Years in Soviet Russia*, 173.
86. In Central and Eastern Europe, for example, the post-communist transition to democratic reform and liberalized economies has led to the emergence of political movements that relapse to antisemitic rhetoric and arguments. See, for example, François Guesnet and Gwen Jones, eds., *Antisemitism in the Era of Transition: Continuities and Impact in Post-Communist Poland and Hungary* (Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang, 2014). On antisemitism in the Soviet context of socioeconomic and political transitions, see Andrew Sloin, "Theorizing Soviet Antisemitism: Value, Crisis, and Stalinist 'Modernity'," in *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 249–81.
87. Mordechai Altshuler, Itskhak Arad, and Shmuel Krakovskii, eds., *Sovetskie evrei pishut Ilie Erenburgu, 1943–1966* (Jerusalem: Center for Research and Documentation of East European Jewry at The Hebrew University, 1995), 275.

CHAPTER 6

1. "From Kiev to Western Ukraine and Down Dnieper, Not a Single Jew Remains," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 29, 1944.
2. The anti-Bolshevik propaganda output from the civil war and the Polish-Soviet War included depictions of Trotsky as the murderous leader of the Red Army. He appeared with enormous paws dripping in blood, reminiscent of the devil, or was portrayed while holding a weapon soaked in blood. See, for example, "Bolshevik Freedom," depicting Trotsky sitting on a pile of skulls, in Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1921), 281. See also YIVO Archives, RG. 222 (Institut der NSDAP zur Erforschung der Judenfrage), box 22, fol. 215, Anti-Trotsky Propaganda poster.
3. YIVO Archives, RG. 222 (Institut der NSDAP zur Erforschung der Judenfrage), box 17, fol. 142, p. 200.

4. On the image of Jews as dangerous "bloodsuckers" and exploitative profiteers who "suck out the blood of the people like water," see Mikhail Mitsel, "Shtetl-Kiev v 1958 godu (opyt rekonstruktsii sobytiy)," in *'Shtetl' jak fenomen evreiskoi istorii*, ed. G. Aronov (Kyiv: Institut Iudaiki, 1999), 180–86, in particular, 181; and see Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "The Figure of Bloodsucker in Polish Religious, National, Left-Wing Discourse in the Years 1945–1946: A Study in Historical Anthropology," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 29, no. 2 (2013): 75–106.
5. Yakov S. Khonigsman, *Liudy, gody, sobytia: Stati iz nashei davnei i nedavnei istorii* (Lvov: Lvovskoe obshchestvo evreiskoi kultury im. Sholom Aleykhema, 1998), 113–14.
6. "Germans Execute All Jews of Ukrainian Town on Charge of Ritual Murder," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, June 28, 1944. On the ways in which antisemitism pervaded and shaped Nazi propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust, see Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
7. Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 1. The book was apparently translated in different languages spoken by the peoples of the USSR.
8. See Helmutt Schramm, *Der Jüdische Ritualmord: Eine Historische Untersuchung* (Berlin: Theodore Fritsch Varlag, 1943). On Helmut Schramm, see Darren O'Brian, *The Pinnacle of Hatred: The Blood Libel and the Jews* (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2011), 25–30, 32–35, 37–49.
9. Schramm, *Der Jüdische Ritualmord*, 6. References to religiously inspired language were not uncommon among Nazi leaders. See, for example, Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 307.
10. "Sprava ruk zhidivskikh," *Ukrainskyi kurer*, August 10, 1943, 3.
11. Ibid.
12. On wartime propaganda and the Jews, see, for example, Shimon Redlich, *Propaganda and Nationalism in Wartime Russia: The Jewish Antifascist Committee in the USSR, 1941–1948* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1982).
13. See Zeev Levin, "Antisemitism and the Jewish Refugees in Soviet Kirgizia, 1942," *Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe* 1, no. 50 (2003): 191–203.
14. Ibid., 8.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 10–13.
17. For similar dynamics in ethnic tensions between Poles and Jews, in the articulation and reception of antisemitic stereotypes by Poles, and for the emergence of the idea of the criminal Jew, see Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union During World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).
18. See Rozental, *Yidish lebn in ratnfarband*, 164–69.
19. See Levin, "Antisemitism and Jewish Refugees," 11–13. On manifestations of antisemitism directed against World War II Jewish refugees from Ukraine and

Belorussia who evacuated to the regions of Central Asia, see Leonid Smilovitsky, *Jewish Life in Belorussia During the Final Decade of the Stalin Regime, 1944–1953* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 19.

20. See, for example, Antony Beevor and Luba Vinogradova, eds., *A Writers at War: Vasily Grossman with the Red Army, 1941–1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 344–45.
21. Derzhavniy arkhiv Lvivskoi oblasti (Hereafter DALO), f. R-239 (Office of the Public Prosecutor, Lviv Oblast, Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Ukrainian SSR), op. 2, d. 24, l. 13 (Resolution, July 19, 1945).
22. Anna Chichopek, "The Cracow Pogrom of August 1945," in *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 221–38. For more on pogroms coupled with blood libel accusations in postwar Poland, see David Engel, "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946," *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 43–85; István Deák, Jan T. Gross, Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Jan T. Gross, "After Auschwitz: The Reality and Meaning of Postwar Antisemitism in Poland," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol 20, ed. Jonathan Frankel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 199–226. On a staged blood libel in the city of Chestochow, see Hersh Smoliar, *Af der letster pozitsye mit der letster hofenung* (Tel Aviv: Peretz Farlag, 1982), 51, 56–57, 284–85.
23. On the Kielce pogrom, see Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland After Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006).
24. Mikhail Mitsel, *Obshchiny iudeiskogo veroispovedaniia v Ukraine, Kiev-Lvov, 1945–1981gg* (Kiev: Sfera, 1998), 12–13. For more on the Jewish community in Lvov from 1944 to 1962, see Tarik Cyril Amar, "Yom Kippur in Lviv: The Lviv Synagogue and the Soviet Party State, 1944–1962," *East European Jewish Affairs* 35, no. 1 (2005): 91–110.
25. On the history of the city caught up between different political regimes and forces during the twentieth century, see Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City Between Stalinists, Nazis and Nationalists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
26. DALO, f. R-239, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 1–48 (Case against Ivan Mikhailovich Fedak; Mikhail Yulianovich Badak; Matvei Vasilevich Kobrinskii; Mariia Ilinichna Skribaicho and Anna Filippovna Shmigel, accused of igniting national hatred against the Jewish people).
27. DALO, f. R-239, op. 2, d. 24, l. 6 (Resolution, June 18, 1945).
28. Ibid., ll. 9–10 (Resolutions, July 18, 1945; August 2, 1945).
29. Ibid., l. 12 (Resolutions, July 20, 1945).
30. Ibid., l. 13 (Resolution, July 19, 1945).
31. Ibid., ll. 14–15 (Resolution, July 19, 1945).
32. Ibid., l. 18 (Indictment, August 22, 1945).

33. Ibid., ll. 3 (Protocol of the Investigation, June 14, 1945).
34. On the establishment and role of the SS Division Halychyna during the German occupation, see David R. Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 183–93.
35. DALO, f. R-239, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 4 (Resolution, July 18, 1945).
36. For more about the city under Soviet rule, see Amar, *Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv*, in particular chs. 4–6.
37. For an example of Leningrad residents who survived the blockade and resettled in Ukraine, see V. V. Stetskevich, V. O. Shaikan, and R. P. Shlyakhtych, eds., *Krivii Rih: Likholittia 1941–1945 (Istorichnyi narisni)* (Krivii Rih: Vidavnichnyi tsenter DVNZ "KNU," 2015), 398–401, "Excerpts of the memoirs by R. D. Ignatova."
38. See DALO, f. R-239, op. 2, d. 24, l. 8 (Resolution, July 18, 1945). On cannibalism and memories of cannibalism in the Soviet context, see, for example, Tamara Polishchuk, ed., *Stolytsia vidchaiu: Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. na Kharkivshchyni vustamy ochevydtsiv: svidchennia, komentari* (Kharkiv: "Berezil'" Vydavnytstvo M.P. Kots, 2006); Andrea Graziosi, Lubomyr A. Hajda, and Halyna Hryn, eds., *After the Holodomor: The Enduring Impact of the Great Famine on Ukraine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Ruslan Pyrih, ed., *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraini: Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv: KMA, 2007); and V. A. Smolii, ed., *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraini: prychyny ta naslidky* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2003).
39. " 'Special Communiqué by the Head of the Dnepropetrovsk NKGB, August 22, 1945," in Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy*, 127–29.
40. Ibid., 128.
41. See, for example, Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, eds., *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 2003), 82.
42. " 'Special Communiqué by the Head of the Dnepropetrovsk NKGB, August 22, 1945," in Mitsel, *Evrei Ukrainy*, 129. In the postwar period, rumors about "Jews killing people and making shashlik [fried meat] out of them" appeared in the Soviet borderland. See Diana Dumitru, "Returning Home After the Holocaust. Jewish-Gentile Encounters in the Soviet Borderland," in *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics*, ed. Frank Bajohr and Andrea Low (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 307–21.
43. See Marples, *Heroes and Villains*, 214–18.
44. While Ukrainian Uniate belong to the Eastern Catholic Church and practice the Eastern rite, they share the same allegiance to the Pope as Polish Catholics.
45. On the emergence of a Polish-Ukrainian alliance in the midst of anti-Jewish violence in Lvov during the war, see John-Paul Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists and the Carnival Crowd," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 53, nos. 2–4 (2011): 209–43.

46. DALO, f. R-239, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 41–42 (Prosecutor's Office Resolution, April 20, 1946).
47. Ibid., l. 44 (Decision, 6/10, 1946).
48. On the rise of antisemitism as a postwar phenomenon, see Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, in particular chapter. 6; Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*; Joshua Rubenstein and Vladimir P. Naumov, eds., *Stalin's Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001); and Jonathan Brent, *Stalin's Last Crime: The Plot Against the Jewish Doctors, 1948–1953* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003).
49. According to Semyon Reznik, the Soviet Union officially forbade the discussion of ritual murder accusation. See Semyon Reznik, *The Nazification of Russia: Anti-Semitism in the Post-Soviet Era* (Washington, DC: Challenge Publications, 1996), 168. In Reznik's opinion, the revival of the blood libel accusation in the 1970s was partly due to the reprint of some antisemitic brochures in Samizdat form, such as, for example, the report on ritual murder by the well-known Russian language lexicographer Vladimir I. Dal.
50. On the role that the fear of "International Jewry" played in successfully spreading the lie about the Doctors' Plot, see Mordechai Altshuler, "More About Public Reaction to the Doctors' Plot," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 2, no. 30 (1996); see, in particular, ibid., 54–55.
51. I. B. Zaltsberg, *Yidishe komunistn vegn der yidn-frage in ratnfarband* (Tel Aviv: Fraynt fun yidisher kultur, 1957), 27.
52. Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 181.
53. YIVO Archives, RG 347.7.1 (American Jewish Committee, Foreign Affairs Department, Foreign countries), FAD-1, Box 97, Soviet 50-51, "Treatment of Jews by the Soviets: Seventh Interim Report of Hearings Before the Select Committee on Communist Aggression," Washington, 1954, 16.
54. On the rumor, see, for example, Maris Rowe-McCulloch, "Poison on the Lips of Children: Rumors and Reality in Discussions of the Holocaust in Rostov-on-Don (USSR) and Beyond" (unpublished manuscript).
55. See Mikhail Mitsel, *"Posledniaia glava": Agro-Dzhoint v gody Bolshogo terrora* (Kiev: Dukh i litera, 2012), 399–402. Directed by Herbert Rappaport and Adolf Minkin, the 1938 Soviet movie *Professor Mamlock*, which chronicled the persecution of a successful Jewish surgeon in Weimar Germany, served as counter-evidence to the conspiracy rumors about Jewish doctors.
56. Shaporina, *Dnevnik*, 153.
57. Ibid., 154.
58. "Letter used to stage the anti-Jewish purges in the medical institutions of Leningrad, April–May 1949," in Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm,* 432–34.

59. "V. M. Andrianov to G. M. Malenkov in support of the letter proposing to begin the anti-Jewish purge in the medical institutions of Leningrad, 5 May, 1949," in ibid., 434.
60. "V. S. Abakumov to G. M. Malkovu o 'zasorennosti' kadrov v klinike lechebnogo pitaniia," in ibid., 435–37.
61. The majority of medical professionals who were arrested in the wake of the Doctors' Plot were Jewish. See, for example, Lithuanian Special Archives (section of KGB Documents), f. 1, op. 10, d. 149, ll. 187–207 ("MGB Memorandum about the condition of the medical institutions in the Lithuanian SSR, 17 March 1953").
62. Emil Draitser, *Shush! Growing Up Jewish Under Stalin: A Memoir*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 273–75.
63. Yakov Rapoport, *The Doctors' Plot of 1953: A Survivor's Memoir of Stalin's Last Act of Terror Against Jews and Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 84.
64. Draitser, *Shush!*, 274–75. For similar allegations, see Rapoport, *Doctors' Plot of 1953*, 84.
65. "Special Communiqué to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, Vilnius, 27 February, 1953," in Vytautas Tininis, ed., *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944–1953*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos karo akademija, 2003), 278–79. For personal accounts about the Doctors' Plot and its repercussions, see Yulian Rafes, *Dorogami moei sudby: Vostochnaia Evropa XX vek: shtrikhi zhizni v vospominaniiakh vracha* (Baltimore, MD: VIA Press, 1997); and Aleksei T. Rybin, *Stalin i delo vrachei: Zapiski svideteliia* (Moscow: Gudok, 1995).
66. " 'Special Communiqué," in Tininis, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje*, 279–80.
67. Lithuanian Special Archives (section of KGB Documents), f. 1, op. 10, d. 152, l. 135 ("Special Message to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, Aronov, January 1953").
68. Personal Interview with Esfir Bramson, Vilnius, October 2010.
69. Mordechai Altshuler, "The Party and Popular Reaction to the 'Doctors' Plot' (Dnepropetrovsk Province, Ukraine)," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 2, no. 21 (1993): 58, n. 27.
70. Altshuler, "Party and Popular Reaction to the 'Doctors' Plot,' " 58. On the popular reaction to the Doctors' Plot, see also Altshuler, "More About Public Reaction to the Doctors' Plot," in particular, 41–42; and Alexander Lokshin, "The Doctors' Plot: The Non-Jewish Response," in *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union,* ed. Yaakov Ro'i (Ilford, UK: Frank Cass, 1995), 157–67.
71. Altshuler et al., *Sovetskie evrei pishut Ilie Erenburgu*, 306 ("Letter from Simferopol, 12 January, 1953").
72. Yitzchak Zilber, *To Remain a Jew: The Life of Rav Yitzchak Zilber* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2010), 228 (translation of original in Russian: Chtoby ty ostalsja evreem, 2003).

73. Ibid., 229.
74. Rapoport, *The Doctors' Plot of 1953*, 76. As late as 1974, almost twenty years after Stalin's death, the image of the Jew as a murderer of children was still alive, and could be exploited by the authorities in their battle against Jewish emigration. When Mikhail Stern, a practicing pediatrician for over thirty-six years in the city of Vinnitsa, applied to move to Israel with his family, he was promptly arrested by local KGB officials. The official charges filed against him had nothing to do with his intentions to resettle in Israel but were reminiscent of the Doctors' Plot medical blood libels. He was accused of attempting to poison little children who were under his care. See "Soviet Jewish Doctor Charged With Attempted Poisoning of Children," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 1, 1974.
75. Alexander Rindziunski, *Hurban Vilna* (Lohamei ha-geta'ot, Israel: Beit lohamei hageta'ot, 1987), 228–29. For other instances of ritual murder accusations in Vilnius, see, for example, "Jews Attacked in Soviet Lithuanian Town; Several Seriously Hurt," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 1963; Alexander Lokshin, "Iz istorii krovavogo naveta v Sovetskom soiuze," *Lechaim* 11, no. 139 (2003): https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/139/lokshin.htm.
76. Blood accusations occupied a similar place in postwar Polish society. In 1947, for example, a Warsaw school teacher openly revealed to his students the belief in Jewish ritual murder, and referred to the Beilis case as evidence; Michal Glowinski, *The Black Seasons*, trans. Marci Shore (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 153–54.
77. All the statistics are from Mordechai Altshuler, *Religion and Jewish Identity in the Soviet Union, 1941–1964* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 104.
78. William Korey, *Russian Antisemitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism* (Chur, Switzerland: Published for Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), Hebrew University of Jerusalem, by Harwood Academic, 1995), 11.
79. Trofim Kychko, *Iudaïzm bez prykras* (Kyiv: Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, 1963).
80. On Kychko charged with collaboration and his partial rehabilitation see Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 55, 57, 61–62. See also Julius Jacobson, ed., *Soviet Communism and the Socialist Vision* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1972).
81. Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 201.
82. William Korey, "Brezhnev and Soviet Anti-Semitism," in *Soviet Jewry in the Decisive Decade, 1971–80*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984), 36–37.
83. Pinkus, *Jews of the Soviet Union*, 232. For an explanation as to why ritual murder accusations and anti-Jewish violence were largely concentrated in these areas, see Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 214.
84. For a reference to the myth of Jews and ritual murder in prewar Vilna, see Masha Rolnikaite, *Doroga domoi* (Moscow: Svidetel, 2016), 16–19. On antisemitism in

postwar Vilnius, see David E. Fishman, *The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis* (Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2017); see, in particular, ibid., pt. three.

85. The Ukrainian republic had a particularly high percentage of economic trials involving Jews. See Pinkus, *Jews of the Soviet Union*, 177–78. For a blood libel in postwar Belorussia, see Leonid Smilovitsky, *Jewish Life in Belorussia During the Final Decade of the Stalin Regime, 1944–1953* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 107. For a reference to the belief in ritual murder in the postwar period, see William Korey, "The Origins and Development of Soviet Anti-Semitism: An Analysis," *Slavic Review* 31, no. 1 (1972): 112.
86. Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 208.
87. Lithuanian Special Archives (section of KGB Documents), f. 11, op. 1, d. 2374, l. 9 (Special Report on the disruption of public order in the city of Plunge on September 10, 1958). See also Lokshin, "Iz istorii krovavogo naveta v Sovetskom soiuze," https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/139/lokshin.htm; "Jews Attacked in Soviet Lithuanian Town; Several Seriously Hurt," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 2, 1958.
88. Lithuanian Special Archives, f. 11, op. 1, d. 2374, l. 10; and Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 209.
89. Personal interview with Esfir Bramson, October 2010; and see *Jews in Eastern Europe* 2, no. 3 (September 1963): 37–38; ibid., 2, no. 4 (February 1964): 28–30; and *Nusakh Vilne buletin*, March 1964, no. 9, 41.
90. Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 209. For the letters sent to Ehrenburg, the writer's response, and the letter by the prosecutor's office, see Altshuler et al., *Sovetskie evrei pishut Ilie Erenburgu*, 431–40.
91. "'Blood-libel' Outbreaks in Soviet Asia," 36. On Buinaksk, see also Altshuler, *Yehudei Mizrah Kavkaz*, 145–46.
92. Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 210. See also "Soviet 'Blood Libel' Article Against Jews Shocks U.N. Diplomats," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 7, 1960; and "Moscow Urged to Punish Writer of Anti-Jewish Blood Libel Article," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 30, 1960.
93. Charny, "Krovavye navety v SSSR," 212–13. See also Lokshin, "Iz istorii krovavogo naveta v Sovetskom soiuze," https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/139/lokshin.htm.
94. Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews: 1948–1967: A Documentary Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 463–65. See also Altshuler, *Sovetskie evrei pishut Ilie Erenburgu*, 431–40. On instances of blood libels in the Caucasus under the tsar, see Altshuler, *Yehudei Mizrah Kavkaz*, 135–38, 141.
95. On Soviet attempts to cover up the blood libel, see "'Blood-Libel' Outbreaks in Soviet Asia," 37–38.
96. Ibid., 34–36. See also Lokshin, "Iz istorii krovavogo naveta v Sovetskom soiuze," https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/139/lokshin.htm.

CONCLUSION

1. Rubenstein and Naumov, *Stalin's Secret Pogrom.* On pogroms and ritual murder in Communist Poland see, for example, Smoliar, *Af der letster pozitsye*, 51–59, 282–89.
2. See http://segonya.ua/oldarchive/c2256713004f33f5c2256e40004f79d9.html; and http://m.znaj.ua/ru/history/koshmar-na-tatarke-spustya-vek-ubyica-tak-y-ne-nazvan, accessed May 3, 2018.
3. A. M. Volkovskii, "Sud naroda ili ritualnoe ubiistvo?," *Pamiat* no. 3 (1993): 7, cited in Jonathan Brent, *Inside the Stalin Archives: Discovering the New Russia* (New York: Atlas & Co., 2008). On the history of *Pamiat*, see Marlène Laruelle, *Le Rouge et le noir. Extrême droite et nationalisme en Russie* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 2007).
4. See, for example, https://www.rferl.org/a/tsar-nicholas-ritual-killing-jews-anti-semitism/28884466.html, accessed May 7, 2018; and https://meduza.io/en/feature/2017/11/30/federal-investigators-have-reopened-the-tsar-nicholas-ii-murder-case-and-the-russian-orthodox-church-wants-them-to-consider-a-notoriously-anti-semitic-conspiracy-theory, accessed May 7, 2018.
5. See US Department of State, Diplomacy in Action, 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Ukraine, accessed May 1, 2018, https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eur/154456.htm.
6. This is also confirmed by Hannah Rosenthal, who served at the time as the US State Department's antisemitism monitor. Personal Interview with Hannah Rosenthal, May 22, 2018.
7. Mustafa Tlass, *Matzah Sionu* (Kiev: MAUP, 2004). I thank Per Rudling for sharing several MAUP publications with me.
8. See https://forward.com/fast-forward/397634/russian-deadly-mall-fire-sparks-blood-libels-against-the-jews/, accessed May 8, 2018.
9. USHMM, RG-50.473*0076, Interview with Regina Prudnikova, 8/21/2000.
10. Alexander Lvov, "Mezhetnicheskie otnosheniia: ugoshenie matsoi i 'krovavyi navet,'" in *Shtetl XXI vek: Polevye issledovaniia*, ed. Valery Dymshits (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2008), 75. On ritual murder accusation as an expression of "evil folklore," see A. Dandes, "'Krovavyi navet', ili legenda o ritualnom ubiistve: antisemitizm skvoz prizmu proektivnoi inversii," in *Folklor: Semiotika i/ili psikhoanaliz* (Moscow: Vost. Lit-ra RAN, 2003).
11. Lvov, "Mezhetnicheskie otnosheniia," 77.
12. For similar ethnographic studies conducted in contemporary Poland, see Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Legendy o krwi, antropologia przesądu* (Warsaw: WAB, 2008); and Alina Cala, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1995). In some cases, only the drops of blood that Jews drew from the child to satisfy their rituals remained, without any alleged murder. For instance, in 1963, in a small city in Georgia, a Jewish dentist was accused of drawing blood from a six-year-old boy and selling it to the synagogue to bake the matzah. *Jews in Eastern Europe* 2, no. 3 (September 1963): 37–38.

13. I. N. Afanasev and V. P. Kozlov, eds., *Istoriia stalinskogo gulaga: Konets 1920-kh-pervaia polovina 1950-kh godov: sobranie dokumentov v semi tomakh* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004).
14. L. Ostrovskii, *Di yidn in Ratnfarband* (Paris: Undzer eynikayt, 1959), 19.
15. Ibid., 19–20.
16. See Leonid Praisman, "Moscow," in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 1205; Benjamin Eliav, "Antisemitism in the Soviet Block," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 2, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (2nd ed., Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale, Macmillan, 2007), 228; and http://eleven.co.il/jews-of-russia-and-ussr/government-society-and-jews-1772-1917/13251/, accessed May 1, 2018.
17. Personal Interview with Sofia and Arye Dranovsky, New York City, May 15, 2018. According to Arye Dranovsky, the Jewish residents of Malakhovka feared a pogrom also in 1953 (perhaps at the time of the Doctors' Plot). As the usual fliers calling for a pogrom appeared in the town, the local police advised Jews to stay home. Arye remembers how his mother barricaded their home, securing the windows and doors with furniture and pillows. In the end the pogrom did not actually happen.
18. http://www.rujen.ru/index.php/%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%94%D0%98%D0%96%D0%90%D0%9D, accessed May 7, 2018.
19. See, for example, https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/ukraine-unveils-statue-honoring-leader-who-killed-up-to-50-000-jews-1.5458258, accessed on May 7, 2018.
20. Elena Dundovich, "Russian Memory of the First World War," in *The First World War: Analysis and Interpretation*, ed. Antonello Biagini and Giovanna Motta, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 67. On contemporary myths surrounding Denikin, see G. M. Ippolitov, "Anton Ivanovich Denikin: novye legendy, sotvorennye na styke XX–XXI stoletii," in *Rossiia v usloviakh krizisov XIX–XX vekov*, ed. R. R. Khisamutdinov (Orenburg: Orenburgskii gosudarstvenniy pedagogicheskii universitet, 2017), 202–8; and G. M. Ippolitov, "Anton Ivanovich Denikin: eskiz istoriko-psikhologicheskogo portreta," *Vestnik Russkoi khristianskoi gumanitarnoi akademii* 18, no. 4 (2017): 31–42.
21. See, for example, http://timesofisrael.com/russian-tv-series-claims-jewish-trotsky-masterminded-the-bloody-1917-revolution, accessed May 15, 2018.
22. See, for example, Yuri Vendik, "MID Rossii zaiavil o 'evreiskikh pogromakh' na Ukraine," BBC Russkaia sluzhba, June 23, 2015, accessed January 7, 2019.
23. See Sergio Della Pergola, "World Jewish Population, 2016," in *American Jewish Year Book 2016*, ed. Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin, vol. 116 (Cham, Switzerland: Springer), 43–44, 48; and Marc Tolts, "Population and Migration," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, 1430.
24. See, for example, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/03/opinion/chechnyas-anti-gay-pogrom.html, accessed 7 May, 2018. In its post-revolutionary essence, the

term "pogrom" was re-conceptualized and came to include any political or social commotion or riot at odds with the political line, namely any reactionary manifestation. It was progressively deprived of a Jewish connotation. For example, the authoritative *Slovar sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka* defined a pogrom as a "reactionary chauvinistic action, accompanied by mass murder, robbery, and destruction of property," with no mention of Jews. See *Slovar sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*, vol X (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 201.

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